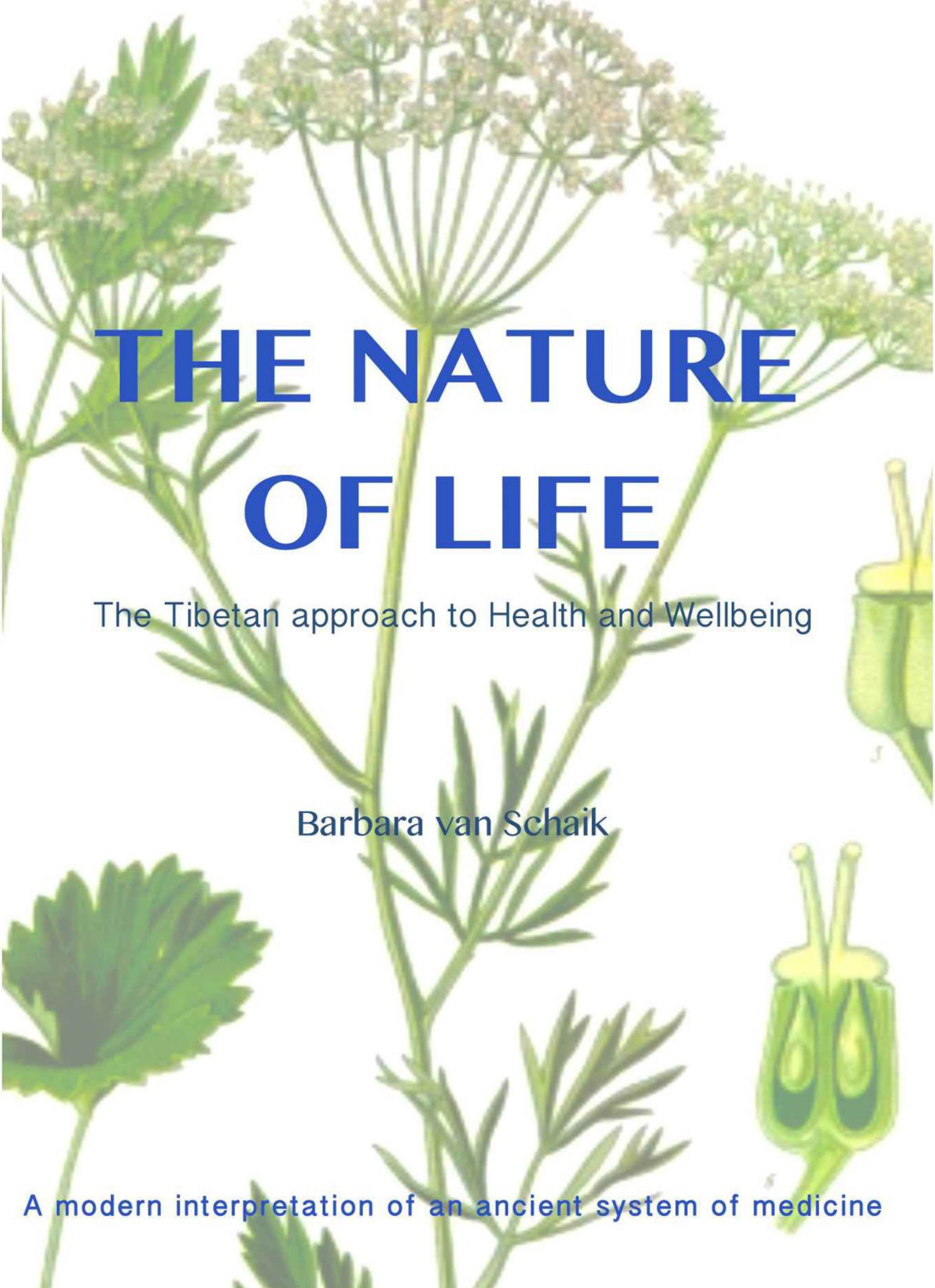


THE NATURE OF LIFE

The Tibetan approach to Health and Wellbeing

Barbara van Schaik

A modern interpretation of an ancient system of medicine

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‘Medicine for the Soul’
Inscription above the door of the Library at Thebes

For my family

About the Author

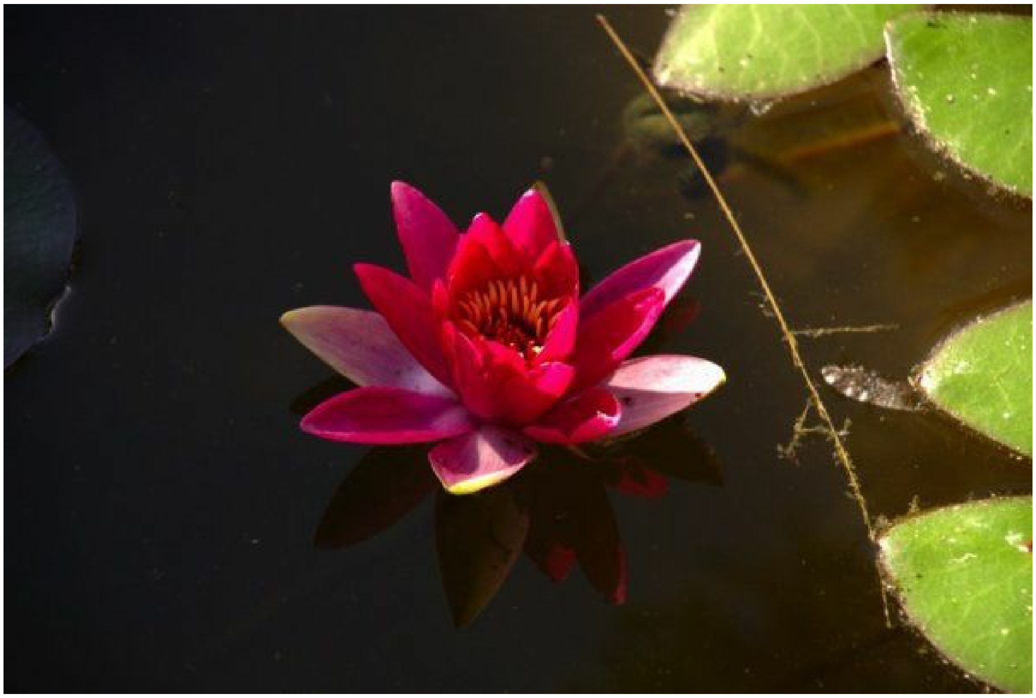
BARBARA VAN SCHAIK was born and grew up in London. She has travelled and lived all over the world, most importantly in Asia. She researched Tibetan Medicine in Nepal and Bhutan, and at Men Zee Khang in Dharamsala. She holds diplomas in Design and Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM).

Barbara has three grown-up sons and lives in Northern Tuscany with her husband.

Other books by the Author:
The Cloud Garden

For further information see Facebook page www.facebook.com/TheNatureOfLife

No one body or mind is the same, no one diet appropriate for all, no one lifestyle or pattern of behaviour is suitable for every body



The ideal state is a body in BALANCE.

What we are attempting to do is to try to bring all the Elements of ourselves into balance - for a truly whole and satisfying life, avoiding the pitfalls of a life lived without awareness of our unique selves, our strengths and our weaknesses, and what it really means to be nourished and nurtured. To know, to hone and to enhance our responses to life.

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Preface

The Tibetan approach to health is holistic in that it is truly inclusive of both body and mind.
Today, where health and wellbeing are concerned it is generally recognized all aspects of lifestyle and mental attitude contribute to overall health. The Tibetan approach to a healthy body and mind has been understood and practised since ancient times. At the heart of the ancient medicine teachings is the theory of the Three Humours (or Natures) and supporting this concept is the Three-fold system of advice on Diet, Behaviour and Lifestyle.
Every individual has his or her own personal make-up, and the Tibetan approach is to identify which particular Nature predominates, and advise accordingly.

This advice became, and still is, a way of life, something to adopt and take to heart ,which brings the greatest benefit to those to take it as a practice for life. On the pages that follow is an interpretation of these teachings, adapted for today and easy to follow – giving us the tools with which we can shape our lives to the best of our own, individual Nature.

Identification (and diagnosis) of one's Humoural Nature is ideally carried out during an appointment with a Tibetan physician, but anyone who is interested the possibility of finding to which Nature they belong, can use the appropriate suggestions for diet and lifestyle for the greatest benefit.
Diet in this context is used not in the sense of a weight-loss programme, but as a true 'diet for life' – a way to maximise the potential of an individual when his or her own Humoural Nature has been revealed.



Introduction

What follows is an attempt to de-mystify, update and bring to a wider audience the enormous benefits of the Tibetan advice for living - according to one's own personal Nature.

In addition to the physical medicine, and supporting the Three Humoural Theory the ancient Tibetans prescribed a three-pronged approach to life with advice, for each Nature, based on Diet and recommendations for Lifestyle and Behaviour.

The most detailed advice in the traditional texts deals with Diet, and The Nature of Life expands the brief, but essential recommendations for Behaviour and Lifestyle, interpreting the original material to shape applications for modern life.

New sections have been created, covering Best Environment for each Nature, as well as Interiors and Room Scenting. The ancient Tibetans did not of course offer advice on these but, using a knowledge of Tibetan culture it has been possible to create/I have created/ suggestions in harmony with the **Three individual Natures.**

Also included for each Nature is a list of European herbs (plus some common Asian ones) which most closely match those used in Tibetan medicine. In addition to the traditional therapies in the Appendix (at the end of the book) there is a list of Tibetan doctor practitioners around the world, including websites and addresses where they can be contacted.

By identifying our individual Nature, and following the advice of the ancient teachers, we can bring our awareness to all aspects of daily life, and by making choices as recommended, we can maximize our potential for a life which is healthy in body and appropriate in action, in harmony with our own specific Nature.

The Three Humours (or Natures) of Tibetan Medicine



Tibetan medicine reflects the physical Elements of our world: Earth, Water, Fire and Air or Wind. Tibetans believe the body is composed of these Elements in the same way as every other manifestation we see around us and these Elements are constantly in movement, attempting to attain the ideal state of equilibrium, or balance. It is towards this concept of Balance which Tibetan medical advice is aimed, a body and mind in balance is a body in optimum health. In fact, the current popular concept of Body, Mind and Spirit fits the Three Humoural system very neatly – Body (Earth/Water), Mind (Fire) and Spirit (Air).

The ancient Tibetans believed each individual fell into Three distinct Humoural types - or Natures - based on these Elements. Each person, as a unique individual, has his or her own specific bodily make up. For the practical purpose of identifying and refining our health path, each of us will fall roughly into the three broad categories, or Humoural Natures, as defined by Tibetan medicine – those being: Phelgm (Earth/Water), Bile (Fire), and Air (Energy/Winds). Depending on the predominant Humour of the individual, disorders will be Hot (Bile or Fire) or Cold (Phelgm or Earth and Water) or both (Air or Energy/Wind) – which can be hot but which is more often cool to cold) and will affect those parts of the body associated with that particular Humour.

It should be noted that it is rare for an individual to be governed by only one Humour, a truly balanced person for instance would carry all three. However, for the purposes of diagnosis, treatment and lifestyle advice, the individual's predominant Humour, or Nature is used by practitioners.

Each Humour has both a physical and a psychological aspect, and each influences the individual in very specific ways. Identification of one's predominant Humour is the key to unlocking one's own personal Nature, and adopting an approach to life based on knowing what really works for you.

Classical Description Of The Three Humours

The Elements of the world - the Elements of medicine:

EARTH & WATER(Phelgm)–Body/Fluids FIRE(Bile)-Blood/Heat WIND & SPACE(Air) – Breath/ Spirit

The **PHELGM HUMOUR (the EARTH Nature)**: not just that on the chest but all the Cold and Damp-natured diseases of the body. Its Nature is Earth and Water and its properties are: Cool, Heavy, Blunt, Smooth and Sticky. The Phelgm Humour sustains the body's fluids, mixes food in the stomach, steadies the mind and helps to keep joints flexible. It is the lubricant of the body. Its characteristic is cold, said in traditional teachings to be 'like the moon, or water'

The psychological characteristic attributed to the Phelgm Humour is Ignorance/Delusion

The **BILE HUMOUR (the FIRE Nature):** the Heat within our body, not simply the Bile in the gallbladder. It's Nature is Fire and is properties are: Oily, Sharp, Hot, Light and Moist.

The Bile Humour generates vital digestive heat within the body and controls feelings of hunger and thirst. It is responsible for the body's vitality and the complexion's radiance. The Bile Humour is always seen as being closely connected with the Blood – and the term 'hot-blooded' can define the Bile Humoural Nature

The psychological characteristic attributed to the Bile Humour is Aversion/Judgement

The **AIR HUMOUR (the AIR Nature):** The Air Humour is Breath, Winds, Energy. Also Spirit and Mental activity. It's Nature is Movement and it's properties are: Rough, Coarse, Light and Cold, Thin and Hard.

The Air Humour is the fan which moves dis-ease around the body and is said to pervade every part of the body, 'going everywhere' - it's energy moving the body's different elements, from the subtle energies of the mind to the circulation of the blood, but the Air Humour also controls the functioning of internal organs and external limbs, as well as the breath and speech.

The psychological characteristic attributed to the Air Humour is Desire/Attachment

The ideal body is a body holding all three humours equally, in **balance and perfect equilibrium**. This is the goal of Tibetan medicine, as it is taught.

A disturbance in one or a combination of the Three Humours results in dis-ease, or illness - lack of equilibrium, or balance in the body's delicate landscape. Such disturbances result from **ignorance of our individual Nature**, and what best nurtures and sustains our particular energy, whether relating to diet or lifestyle and behaviour.

All disorders should be seen as a reflection of a person's individual Nature, together with their way of life.

Note: Instead of Humour - the term Nature will be used, being more relevant for today. PHELGM is a combination of both EARTH and WATER, but here the term EARTH describes the Cold Humour or Nature – keeping in mind that WATER is always implicit in the EARTH Nature. Since BILE is in essence Fire, FIRE is used here to describe the Hot Humour (or Nature). The AIR Humour remains as the AIR Nature.]



Brief History Of Tibetan Medicine

Tibetan medicine is an ancient system of medicine which also encompasses advice for diet, lifestyle and behaviour. What is now recognized as 'Tibetan medicine' has its beginnings in the mists of recorded history, perhaps over 1000 years ago. We know that the earliest forms existed long before the first medical conference, held in Tibet around the 6th or 7th century, when one of the early Kings called upon eminent physicians from India, China, Greece, Persia and Nepal to come to Tibet to debate and share their knowledge of medicine.

Elements of medicine from those countries were incorporated into what is now the Tibetan healing system, spread by the movement of people and knowledge along what has become known as the Silk Road. Over the years more journeys were made, and more knowledge transmitted and shared, added to which outstanding figures in the study and practice of Tibetan Medicine both translated and enlarged the ever-growing documentation of the medical texts.

The 17th/18th centuries were said to be the 'Golden Age' of the unique system of Tibetan medicine – when an additional branch of Astrology was added to the Tree of Healing. At this time the first Medical College was established in Lhasa, on a hill overlooking the city, and many talented and eminent physicians studied and in most cases, added to the store of knowledge, with specialties developed and existing treatments improved.

Many have seen the Indian Ayurveda system of medicine as having a contributing influence, sharing as they do the three pronged basis of the theory, in the form of the dosas, and it does seem that travellers to India brought back texts which were slowly integrated into the Tibetan system. Chinese medicine has also played a large part in the assembling of the Medical treatises and in China today, the system is being both taught and practiced (although stripped of any spiritual element).

Until fairly recently the healing art of Tibetan Medicine and its effective and natural methods of enhancing physical and mental health, shaped by the unique culture and environment of Tibet, was little known in the West. But today the science of Tibetan Medicine is becoming stronger and more wide-spread than ever.

Tibetan Medicine For Today



There is a strong element of self-help in Tibetan Medicine which is appropriate for today's informed approach to health and a desire to take charge of one's own life.

Tibetan doctors traditionally taught some basics, easily grasped, to lay people in order that they might be aware of their body's health, or ill-health, and take certain steps to maintain, or alleviate whatever conditions arose.

This was a necessity, borne of the need for people to be able to 'manage' their own and their family's health as much as possible, living as most people did, in far-flung communities on the harsh Tibetan plateau, many, many miles from doctors.

Such an approach also serves us well for today, when there is so much publicity and awareness of unsatisfactory practices around the supply of foodstuffs in our flawed physical environment, together with the tensions and stresses we now face living in a modern world.

Whilst no-one would advocate a turning away from modern medicine, a awareness of what is right for us, what really nourishes us, and what does not, can only be of the greatest benefit to ourselves, as we progress through our lives, and to the people we love. For an informed approach to health and a desire to take charge of one's own life, we need first to find which of the Three Humours most closely matches us, and identify our own Nature.

On the following page(s) is a Quiz which is designed to help you find your own personal Nature. After that it will be easy to turn to the relevant section and be guided as to the best way to work with your own special strengths and weaknesses, to manage and maximize your life's potential.



Dietary Advice

There is no one ‘catch-all’ diet which can maximise the health of every individual.

Normally, when diets are prescribed and gain popularity, there is no awareness that different foods and behaviour affect different people in different ways. Certain dietary and/or lifestyle advice could actually have an adverse effect, or even be dangerous if practised by an individual whose Nature is not in harmony with the system advocated.

Today’s dietary advice is inconsistent and misleading. We are bombarded with a never-ending selection of diets and with all the focus on weight-loss, the importance of foods for their nutritional value comes a poor second along with their long-lasting effect on our lives.

All this results in a ‘chop and change’ response, which is never resolved, nor sustaining or sustainable. And all our potential to be healthy, alert, able in mind and body, well-nourished in every sense, is lost.

Tibetan doctors believe that every food that grows is there to nourish us, and that what we eat can, and should be a selection from everything that is available to us.

The key is to understand our own body’s Nature, not difficult, then to tailor our diet to that.

If we can find and follow an approach to life which is really appropriate for one’s constitutional Nature, apply the recommendations regarding lifestyle and behaviour, then add to this some time set aside for contemplation or meditative activity – or reflective practices such as yoga or chi gong - then one has a pattern for life which can really maximise all the potential an individual possesses. From the Land of the Snows comes a story for life.



Digestive Heat

Tibetans place the greatest emphasis on digestive heat. This would seem to have arisen out of the time and place of the origins of their medicine, the icy lands and snow mountains, the unheated shelters and lack of any artificial methods of heating, either internally or externally. It is thought that a strong digestive heat is the most important attribute an individual can possess and that such digestive heat will lead those who take steps to maintain it through a healthy lifetime into a good old age. Digestive heat can be seen as the furnace which fuels the 'engine' of the body's systems. Loss of digestive heat, if unchecked, will eventually lead to a body so weakened that it will be prone to all kinds of life-threatening disorders. Digestive heat, when functioning at best, promotes a feeling of wellbeing and generates a vital life energy. Proper digestion, nutritional processes and elimination take place and the individual feels well, happy and strong. It is well-known that stress, strains and depression, frustration, anxiety and fear all deplete the body's energy via diminishing digestive heat.

This concept of digestive heat is something Tibetans always keep in mind as they go through life – remembering that it is necessary to take appropriate action at all times to keep it. When the weather is cold and damp it is commonplace to see people with something warm wrapped over their stomach and hips – a small blanket, or a towel; this keeps in the warmth and avoids the aptly-named 'Cold Kidney' and its attendant problems. It is easy to adapt this idea to not allowing ourselves to get cold in cold and damp conditions, to make sure we are always warmly dressed for the weather.

Also, throughout the year dietary and lifestyle advice is followed – in the heat of Summer, no spicy or hot foods to aggravate the Fire Humour; in Spring and early Autumn when winds and the Air Humour is dominant, no dry fruits or foods known to increase the dry Air Nature of the body, and in the cold Winter, no cold/damp foods or drinks which increase the Phelgm conditions.

All Three Humours are involved in the regulation of the body's digestive heat. Operating predominantly in different areas of the digestive tract, Earth and Water, Fire and Air energies all assist in breaking-down, digestion, absorption and elimination of food items. These foodstuffs are then processed into the three main types of energies depending on the Nature of their individual post-digestive tastes: Sour, Bitter and Sweet - which correspond to proteins, carbohydrates, fats, etc.

But it should be remembered that – in line with the ever-present notion of MODERATION and BALANCE – too much digestive heat will adversely affect the body, burning up the fluids, and speeding up the body processes contributing to ageing. In the case of the Fire Nature - where there is already heat in the body - there may be a danger of hypertension. With individuals of the cool to cold Air and Earth/Water Natures, the opposite applies and these two Humoural Natures must nurture their digestive heat. And in times of convalescence, chronic illness, pregnancy and old age, it is especially important to give a high priority to the maintenance of a good digestive heat.



Quiz

Which Nature are you?

1. If you miss a meal do you feel: jumpy and anxious
(a) Yes (b) Absolutely fine (c) Sometimes, sometimes not

2. Do you find you are always having to cut your hair and nails?
(a) No (b) Sometimes (c) Always

3. Do you easily feel claustrophobic in lifts or underground trains?
(a) Yes, I struggle to overcome it (b) No (c) Sometimes

4. Are you constantly thinking of the 'next thing'? Planning and possibly scheming to 'get ahead' in some way?
(a) Sometimes (b) No (c) Yes

5. Do you find you often get into conflict with other people, both at work and within family or social group?
(a) Sometimes/(b) Not often (c) Very often

6. Are you constantly weighing people up, deciding whether or not they are 'your' kind of people?
(a) Sometimes (b) Not often (c) Yes

7. Would you describe yourself as a jealous person? Do you often have problems with jealousy?
(a) Sometimes (b) No (c) Yes

8. Do you find you constantly have to have a handkerchief with you, and your nose seems to need constant blowing?
(a) Not really (b) Yes, I'm always blowing my nose (c) Only when I have a cold

9. Do you find, when out in a group, that you seem to be able to drink much more than your friends?
(a) About the same as others (b) Yes, I don't have any problems (c) I can't drink very much without feeling affected

10. Do you find it difficult to be with people who view things very differently from you? (a) No, I find it stimulating (b) Yes, I am uncomfortable (c) No, I am quite comfortable

11. Is it hard to let a grudge go?
(a) I tend to hold on to the feelings I have about people (b) I don't really notice what other people do (c) I definitely want my own back

12. Do you find it hard to let people go, to give them space?
(a) I want to be able to have my own space (b) I always give 100% as soon as I like someone (c) I think I can stand back in a relationship

13. After a late night out, do you usually:
(a) Find it hard to get to sleep and wake up at usual time, thereby feeling very tired all day (b) Sleep very well right away, only waking at midday (c) Find it hard to get to sleep but then sleep soundly

14. When you feel like a snack, is it likely to be:
(a) Different things (b) A bag of crisps (c) Chocolate

15. When a new restaurant or holiday destination gets rave reviews, do you have to be the first in your group to go there?

(a) Sometimes (b) No (c) Yes

16. If you suffer from bloating, does it occur:
(a) Before eating (b) During the meal (c) After eating

17. In general, do you have problems with:
(a) Your nose (b) Your ears (c) Your eyes

18. Regarding your body temperature, do you find you usually feel:
(a) Cold, when others are not (b) Usually feel quite comfortable (c) Hot, when others are not

19. In general, how do you sleep?
(a) Never sleep very well, never feel I sleep enough (b) Very soundly always (c) Sometimes good, sometimes not

20. With bowel movements, are you usually:
(a) Constipated (b) Have regular, easy movements (c) Have diarrhoea fairly often

21. If you were offered a special day, just for you, how would you spend it?
(a) Relaxing spa treatments (b) Having a really great meal (c) Something adventurous, like a parachute jump

22. If your partner came home and told you he/she changed your holiday plans on the spur of the moment after hearing about something they thought you'd both enjoy much more, would you feel:
(a) Excited and looking forward to it (b) Thrown off balance and wish he'd/she'd stuck to what you both know? (c) Quite pleased, but concerned about the cost

23. After an evening out with friends, do you:
(a) Often go over in your mind what you said, how you responded, how you came across to others (b) Didn't think about that at all and fell into bed (c) Think you handled it all pretty well and looked good

24. Where in body usually experience problems:
(a) Lower body - indigestion/bloating, constipation etc. (b) Chest – colds and 'flu etc. (c) Head – headaches and eye problems etc.

25. Would you describe yourself as competitive? Do you always have to be first?

(a) Maybe sometimes (b) No (c) Yes

26. Do you find it hard to be in another persons space, where you feel you are 'out of control' :
(a) No, I don't feel like that (b) Yes, I prefer to be in my own area, and know what's happening (c) I can do both quite easily

27. Do you tend to have dark circles under your eyes even when you have slept well?

28. Do you struggle with your weight, even though you try to eat sensibly and exercise?
(a) Sometimes (b) Yes (c) No

29. When you find yourself in a new situation, socially or at the office, do you make sure you work out the dynamics and plan ways to get to the top as soon as possible?
(a) Sometimes (b) No (c) Yes

30. Do you suffer from outbreaks of spots, on your back as well as your face?
(a) Never) (b) No (c) Yes

31. Is it easy to accept new ideas?
(a) I actively seek out new ways and fresh ideas (b) I tend to stick to what I know (c) I'm always open to a different approach

32. In relation to other people, does your skin usually feel:
(a) Normally warm (b) Cool to cold (c) Hot

33. When you spend time with others, new people, do you often feel
(a) Stressed (b) Just the same as with the ones you know (c) Pleased with the new dynamic

34. Even using a strong deodorant, do you still find you sweat too much?
(a) No (b) Sometimes (Yes)

35. If you regularly experience discomfort in the stomach region, is it from:
(a)Excess wind/gassy (b) Indigestion (heavy as against gassy), (c) Acidity (sharp and burning)

36. Are you a 'morning' or an 'evening' person?
(a) Morning (b) Can be both (c) Evening

37. Do you feel most relaxed when:
(a) Lying on a beach in the sun (b) At home, pottering about (c) Doing something physical

38. Do you often have a sense of being clairvoyant?
(a) Yes (b) No (c) Sometimes

39. Do you often feel crowded by other people, and have a need to be alone?
40. Do you tend to jump from one thing to another, finding it hard to see one thing through?
(a) Yes (b) No (c) Sometimes

43. Do you feel you need to know what's coming up in your life, both daily and in the future so you can control it?
(a) No (b) Yes (c) Sometimes

44. Do you regularly worry, about small things?
(a) Sometimes (b) Yes (c) No

45. When there's a new 'must-have' on the market do you always want to be the first among your friends to get it – top of the range if possible too?
(a) Sometimes (b) No (c) Yes

More (a)'s – you have a predominantly AIR Nature

More (b)'s – you have a predominantly EARTH Nature

More (c) 's – you have a predominantly FIRE Nature

Quick check:

Earth – Slow, lazy, stubborn, reliable. Sleeps deeply, dislikes change - sticks to what is known, materialistic, large body frame, thin hair. Struggles with weight, likes to eat (too much), easy going, patient, can drinks lots of alcohol. Overwhelming with too much affection, attention. Bags under eyes and swellings generally. Confusion and delusion. Pulse sunken and slow, urine white with distinct odour, small still bubbles, disperse when stirred.

Fire – Quick temper, ambitious, competitive. Oily skin and hair, tendency to spots/acne, holds a grudge, jealous, possessive, judgemental, greedy for possessions, does everything fast, no patience, intolerant, olive skin, hair reddish tinge, strong urine, strong body smell, high level of sweat, low tolerance for alcohol. Violence. Dark circles under eyes. Pride, jealousy, anger. Pulse fast and taut, small bubbles in urine which quickly burst with a sound, colour dark

Air – Creative, anxious, spiritual. Into one's head (too much thinking). Bad sleep, dry skin, can't miss meals, light skin and hair, thick hair, cold, teeth problems. Stress. Prone to feelings of panic. Envy and Attachment – can't let go. Pulse superficial, press hard and disappears. Big bubbles in urine (moving), light colour.]

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1 THE EARTH NATURE

The Nature of EARTH is SOLIDITY and SMOOTHNESS



EARTH is WATER and the physical BODY - It brings groundedness, or ‘earths’ the body. Without it, or with a deficiency of the Earth/Water Humour, the body becomes not only out of balance, but too light, affecting the mind with flightiness, and the body with stiffness – a lack of flexibility of joints and bodily movement.

The Earth Qualities are Heavy, Damp and Smooth

Earth is said to ‘descend’, the heaviness of Earth and Water sinking down. Smoothness brings to the Earth Nature individual an easy-going manner and smooth skin consistency.

Additional Earth Qualities are Blunt and Sticky

The Earth Characteristic is Oily - which is Cold (the Oily Fire Nature is Hot)

The Earth Symbol is the Lion or Buffalo

Strong and enduring, the Lion’s strength and the stoic steadfastness of the Buffalo exemplify the Earth/Water Nature



The Earth Colour **is Green**

Grass and leaves of flowers and trees, the Element of Earth

The Earth Taste (body constitution) **is Sweet which is Cool to Cold**

The Location of Earth in the Body

Earth is said to 'reside' - found to be located - in the Upper Part of the body. It governs the Brain, the Head, Chest, the Flesh, Joints and Fluids and the First Digestive Level (undigested). The Muscles. Also involved in this pattern is the hair of the Head and its texture, growth and shine – in it's relationship with the Kidney.

Although Earth is located in the Upper body, it is said by Tibetans to 'fall down' - the Heavy characteristics of Phelgm makes it prone to falling to the lower body, and a feeling of heaviness in the lower limbs means that the Phelgm Humour has become out of balance, over-heavy and is 'residing' there.

The Earth Organs

The Earth Nature is dominated by: the Lungs and the Kidney. The Stomach and the Spleen, the Urinary Bladder and the Body Fluids.

Most health problems experienced by Earth Natures will involve these organs.

The Earth 'Flower'

The 'Flower' of the Earth Organs is said to be the Nose. All problems with the Nose are Earth Nature problems. And the Mouth which includes the Lips and the Tongue - and the sense of Taste. This is the physical quality of the mouth and the lips (not Speech which is the Flower of the Air Humour).

To Balance The Earth Nature

Tibetan advice seeks to Warm and Dry the Cold and Damp Earth body and to Lighten and Energise the Slow and Heavy Earth system.

And to begin the process of clarification – removing the obstacles to clear-seeing and thought, which concerns the Mind aspect of the Earth Nature.



The Earth Nature and the Three Ages of Man and Woman

Babyhood/Youth

Tibetan thought attributes the three Humoural Natures to the three Ages of Man/Woman

Traditionally each of the three ages: the unfolding Child/Youth, the flowering and consolidation of the Adult, declining into Spirit of the Elderly, has its own Humour which is said to predominate. With age everything tends to become Lighter, both physically and mentally, and older people must endeavour to find ways to ground themselves, as must anyone with a predominance of the Air Humour.

The Earth Humour is regarded traditionally as Youth (and babyhood). The Smooth quality associated with Phelgm is particularly apparent during youth, both in mental malleability and physical smoothness of skin.

The Earth Nature and Time of Arisal

When the Earth Nature is aggravated and needs special attention

Daily: Twilight and Dawn

Earth Natures will feel their energies most affected in the morning, when the Phelgm Humour is at its strongest. The more negative qualities of close-mindedness and lethargy will be in evidence and at this time Earth should seek activity and situations where their minds are challenged, get up and go to the gym, out for a run or a brisk walk. Read/think about something stimulating! As the morning goes on, the natural good humour, resilience and sense of equilibrium of the Earth Nature returns.

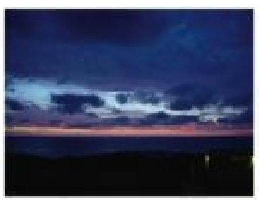
In early evening though, the heaviness (of body and mind) inherent in the Earth system can return, and with awareness, steps can be taken to overcome this.

Seasonal: Autumn and Winter

Cold, Oily and Heavy are qualities attributed to the Autumn/Winter season and Earth should take care not to eat food or engage in lifestyle activities reflecting these properties, for physical Phelgm disorders will follow.

It is important for Earth Natures to have an active, regular programme of exercise during this season, to keep moving and energised, and keep the circulation moving around the body. Stagnation is a problem for Earth - and this applies to both the body and the mind.

See the Diet section for Earth-pacifying foods.

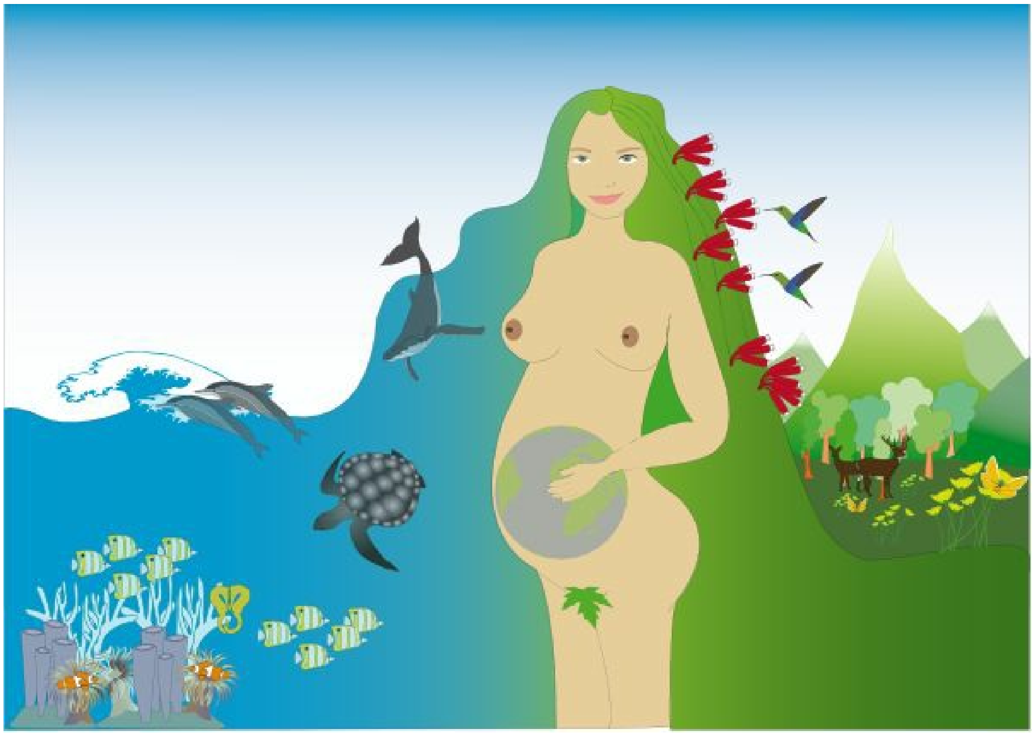
   

The Earth Nature Appearance

A defining characteristic of an Earth body is its smoothness, especially in childhood when their smooth skin is very evident. An Earth Nature skin has a consistent pale and creamy texture, without red or variegated colourings, and tends to be Oily. Even with a relatively slim Earth physique there will be no visible bones, that is to say, the joints are always covered with smooth flesh, unlike an Air or Fire Nature where joints will always be visible. Earth Natures tend to have a large frame and big bones, generally rather overweight. Their eyes are usually round, with a placid gaze. Hair can be either fair or dark, but without any reddish colour. It is also likely to be fine or thin. The Earth body is prone to swelling or oedema, swollen ankles, and in a woman, large breasts.

The Earth speech is steady and calm, with a gentle, pleasing tone.

The Earth Nature Personality



Mother Earth

The Phelgm quality of SMOOTHNESS applies to both the skin of a Earth Nature individual and to his/her easy-going qualities. Earth people have a pleasant, approachable demeanour and are usually calm and steady, generous friends. They are agreeable and try to seek harmony in relationships and in their day-to-day dealings with others. They may tend to agree with others out of a desire for such harmony, rather than risk discord by disagreeing, even if in their hearts they do. This element of repression is a common theme with Earth Natures.

The movements of Earth individuals tend to be smooth and unhurried. They are well grounded, and not easily thrown off course – those with this Nature predominating tend to stay calm and focused, unflappable. They are not easily disturbed. They make reliable and dependable friends and colleagues. A quality which quickly makes itself evident with the Earth Nature is SOLIDITY.

Earth is traditionally thought to embody the act of CONSUMING. This was meant to convey the idea of a body which easily absorbs, in a physical sense only, and can be seen in terms of the ease with which Earth Natures gain weight.

Earth is also HEAVY, which quality expresses itself in the Earth individual appearing physically to be rather slow and sedentary, but importantly, he or she can also be Heavy in the sense of being rigid and stubborn. When people with this Nature decide on something they can be stubbornly clinging. Another, related Earth quality is STICKY! Earth people like to come to a conclusion and stick with it. An Earth mind, once made up, is unwilling to change. The positive aspect of this quality is that when an Earth individual takes on anything, whatever it is will be seen through until the end, with a doggedness and thoroughness not often seen in Air Natures or to the same degree with Fire Natures. Once committed, Earth tends to stay with that. Earth Natures do not enjoy the challenge of the new, preferring the familiar, the well-known and well-understood. They quickly become anxious if asked

to step out of their established comfort zone; need to feel secure and dislike unexpectedness or change. Not surprisingly, Earth Natures heartily dislike decision-making.

Tibetan thought traditionally identifies the Earth Nature as IGNORANCE and DELUSION/CONFUSION. This means something a little different from our modern interpretation. Traditionally it meant (and means) that Earth Natures will be prone to closed-mindedness. It also indicated a lack of understanding of the transitory nature of all things, attachment to which leads to inevitable suffering, and Earth Natures, stuck in their self-created world are most likely to suffer from this.

This 'View' is very important in Tibetan tradition because Buddhist thought teaches that, although we are born inherently clear-seeing, as we begin our life's journey obscurations are collected along the way, and our constant intention should be to become aware of and identify the nature of such obscurations, then work to overcome them and attempt to find our way back to the clear-sight which is our inherent nature. There is an anomaly perhaps in the fact that the Phelgm characteristic of Earth gives the body flexibility, but not the mind.

Traditional teaching describes this confusion as 'coal black'. The implication is that Earth Natures operate without clarity, and finds a modern equivalent in the term 'in the dark' about a particular situation. The Earth individual does not have the clear seeing, or natural understanding of an Air Nature, or the judgemental ability of a Fire Natured individual towards what is happening around them, has happened, or may happen in the future. Or why.

Earth people will seek to create a world for themselves that they identify with early on in life, and very few ever really see a need to change that construct. Wherever Earth goes, he/she will as quickly as possible seek to establish his or her own comfort zone and shut out the unknown, identifying very strongly with their created reality and taking very few chances. While such an approach has obvious positive aspects - the Earth individual will usually feel very confident in his or her self-created world, the negative can be not being open to other influences from unexpected sources, innovative ways of looking at things, different ways of doing things, open in fact to change of any kind. Then when inevitable life changes arise, Earth finds it harder than the other two Humoural Natures to pick up the pieces and go on again.

Earth Natures are generally incurious. This 'fortress' attitude means that Earth will discard all influences he or she does not like the look of, instead of accepting and processing, absorbing or discarding, as he or she goes through life. Such a 'head in the sand' attitude inevitably constrains and limits mental development and in this way he/she may not be able to expand and grow as readily as Air or Fire Natures.

Tibetans see Life itself as constant motion, change, and the suffering that follows such change will be particularly hard-felt by those of the Earth Nature, seeking as they do to control their world and seal it off from unwelcome upheavals. For the other two Natures it is important to bear this in mind, for misunderstanding and discord can arise if this most important aspect of a Earth Nature personality is underestimated or ignored. Friends of Earth individuals might be encouraged to gently probe them from their particular constructed universe and seek to open their minds to other possibilities. Prise the oyster from it's shell.

Traditional Chinese medicine has the concept of STAGNATION and this particularly applies to the Earth Nature, although in Tibetan thinking this has a two-fold meaning in that it applies equally at the mental and physical levels. Earth people incline very naturally to mental and physical stagnation, and

since awareness is a first step to remedying the situation, these individuals should endeavour to find ways to ‘break out’ and overcome this negative aspect of their inherent nature.

However, on the positive side, Earth has particularly good concentration, sleeps very soundly, has a good and steady application to any project taken on, and is said by Tibetans to be able to look forward to a prosperous life. Earth Natures are not prone to the ‘over-thinking’ which can destabilise and undermine Fire, and in particular, Air Natures.

Patient and non-judgemental, accepting of criticism, they can also tolerate hunger unlike Fire and Air Natures, and may expect a ‘long life with body and mind at rest.’ (trad.) Tibetans also say that Earth is ‘karmically prosperous.’ Meaning a steady prosperity, building up step-by-step, is easily achievable by Earth Natures during their lifetimes.

Earth possesses abundance and generosity, but it can be that those with a Earth Nature will ignore or suppress her/his own needs, leading to a repression of self. This can take the form of too much ‘mothering’ or giving - so that the recipient feels overwhelmed and stifled, and since repression of one’s own needs inevitably leads to frustration there can be no satisfactory solution in such a relationship. In fact, and rather controversially, Tibetans believe that there are worse aspects of such repression of self – they believe that certain cancers and hard-to-cure very deep sicknesses are the result of such self-denial. Because they see Earth types as by their very nature (Phelgm), clouded, obscured, it can be difficult for them to be aware of their behaviour, and see what is happening. For this reason it is very important for Earth Natures to question his or her responses when embarking on, or already committed to, any kind of relationship. Passive aggression can be a recourse for Earth and they should try to be open about their feelings and needs – even if unpopular. Risk unpopularity once in a while!

The Earth individual is prone to overindulgence in everything they enjoy - food, life’s activities, and relationships. Remember that the Tibetans traditionally attribute the Phelgm Humour to the act of Consuming. Food is very attractive to Earth Natures to the extent that they can find it difficult to resist or deny themselves when something is enjoyable. Consequently they are very often to be seen struggling with their weight.

Similarly there is a tendency to take relationships in the same way – to overwhelm and demand, where a lighter touch would allow a relationship more space. Buddhist thought teaches that too much attachment leads to suffering, and whilst we are naturally attached to our family and friends, it is worth bearing in mind that we should not be too ‘Heavy’ in the relationship, but give it time and space to breathe.

There can be seen to exist both a ‘healthy’ and ‘unhealthy’ aspect of the emotional condition of the three Humoural types:

Healthy Earth Generous, nurturing, motherly, sympathetic, patient, tolerant. Steady, reliable, diligent, easy-going, good-natured, cheerful. Robust health. Affluent.

Unhealthy Earth Greedy, sluggish, sedentary, passive, uncreative, unimaginative, rigid, oppressive, stifling, repressive. Unaware. Overindulgent, lacking self-discipline, stubborn, fearful, resistant to change, worrying, obsessive, smothering. Overly materialistic.

General Health for The Earth Nature



Problem areas for Earth Natures

Phelgm Humoural disorders are said to arise due to an excessive indulgence in foods and lifestyle which are HEAVY and GREASY and COLD. Alleviated (or pacified) by foods and lifestyle practices which WARM and LIGHTEN the body and mind. (trad.).

Earth is located in the Upper part of the body, in the Brain, Head, Chest and is said to 'fall down', affecting the Fluid processing areas such as the Kidney, Spleen and Bladder.

Therefore, Earth people are likely to be affected by Cold ailments of the Lungs, Kidney and Spleen – the 'watery' afflictions such as colds, urinary problems, indigestion etc.

The 'Sweet' inherent body make-up of the Earth Nature lends itself to a propensity for diabetes and efforts should be made to avoid this by taking the diet and lifestyle advice seriously.

Physically, Earth Natures remain in good health fairly well into later life, but in general tend to suffer problems related to the Body Fluids: oedema, Kidney and urinary problems, cysts and tumours (if combined with Fire) and generally swellings of all kinds. The Cold Nature of the Phelgm Humour (said by Tibetans to be 'cold like the Moon)' leads to them feeling cold in their extremities and care should be taken to keep warm. 'Flus and colds come easily to Earth Natures, since the Lungs and the Chest govern their bodily constitution. Weight gain with its attendant problems is always a possibility due to the easy-going (and rather greedy) Earth nature – which can also become lethargic. A feeling of heaviness in the body is characteristic of Earth individuals. Water retention leading to swelling, as in swollen ankles is often seen. Back pain (the Kidney) and poor muscle tone, as well as yeast problems (Candida) are also associated with the Earth Nature. Generally though Earth Natures are fairly robust and since they are extremely sound sleepers, they are able to easily replenish the energy of their bodies and feel strong.

On a mental level the Earth Nature is linked to the Brain, and Tibetans consider that the Earth people will have a tendency to have a mind which is unclear, or un-aware. They feel that the Thick and Solid aspect of Earth 'clouds' the mind and this will manifest in Earth Natures often feeling indecisive, unclear in their thoughts – unable to 'think things through' and act accordingly. Because of this there is a tendency to keep things bottled up, becoming repressed and ignoring their own needs. In females, there may be a drive to help others, or to 'over-help' in order to cover their own unsatisfied, yet not fully realised, needs. The concept of the 'power of giving' is most commonly

found with those of the Earth Nature. Males are likely to bury themselves in work, putting aside their own needs, leading to a build-up of stress. Such behaviour in Earth people may be the cause of tumours, cysts or even, Tibetan doctors feel - cancer.

Here again, the concept of STAGNATION has relevance, in that with the slow-moving Earth Nature body system, it's inherent Coldness, and it's propensity for physical phelgm, the very real condition of stagnation within the body is always present, leading to many medical problems. The concept of Digestive Heat has particular relevance to Earth, as it has for the Air Nature since both have a Cool to Cold Humour. It should be remembered however, that the Air Nature, although essentially Cool, with its characteristic of Mobility can turn to Heat very easily in a way that Earth cannot. Earth Natures should bear in mind at all times the necessity of keeping the digestion warm, with the aid of both diet and lifestyle activities.

In addition, there is the 'thick-skinned' aspect to the Earth Nature which although having a negative connotation, has a positive effect on health in that Earth can remain resistant to negative influences, both from people around them and in their environment, in a way that Air Natures cannot. Therefore they suffer less from drained energy, and are able to safeguard their robustness in this way.

If a Earth Nature can try to remember this, it is possible to develop the quality of awareness, which will enable them to avoid some of the pitfalls of life that come their way, and generally open themselves to a wider horizon of experience.

It should be remembered that both Air and Fire Natures will at times experience problems with Earth-type disorders since Tibetans believe that stress introduces the Phelgm Humour into the constitution – this is traditionally said to be a result of 'not living a life in accordance with one's emotional, or spiritual needs'. And according to the theories of Tibetan medicine, there are sound reasons for this.

Traditionally, Earth Natures are said to enjoy a long life and be prosperous. With their strong constitution and easy-going approach to life, they can expect a longer lifespan than the other two Humoural Natures, Air and Fire.

An active, energy-generating lifestyle for both body and mind, should be cultivated by Earth Natured individuals.

Ailments that develop SLOWLY and become CHRONIC are Earth Nature disorders.

Personal Poison for Earth Natures

Each of the Three Natures is said to be affected by its own poison:

Delusion, Ignorance and Confusion (trad.) resulting in a lack of Clarity

Earth Natures are said to be subject to Ignorance and Delusion. In a Buddhist sense this means they are not easily receptive to the basic premise of Buddhism - which is that all life experiences are illusional and subject to change at any time, therefore we should always bear this in mind and try to 'touch lightly' in order to save ourselves, as much as possible, from the unnecessary but inevitable suffering of life's changes. Earth Natures find this concept congenitally hard to accept and can become very materialistic, neglecting their spiritual aspect and being out of touch with their real feelings and emotions.

In other words, this means that those of the Earth Nature can go through life being unaware – of their needs, the reality of others needs, as well as aspects of life beyond their own self-created comfort

zone.

Personal Positive for Earth Natures

Solidity and Stability

Earth Natures are more ‘Solid’ both mentally and physically than the other two Natures, and therefore have a more robust attitude to life. This ‘Solid’ quality of body also serves them well in that they are often more resistant to airborne diseases, such as viruses. They are steady and persevering, and (until disruptive change comes) able to ‘sail through’ quite happily, whereas the other two Natures are much more introspective and can be strongly affected by what is going on around them. Earth Natures also sleep very soundly, a good basis for riding out the problems of life.

Diet - Moderation and Balance

Tibetan Medicine believes that moderation serves us best in all areas and the way we eat is no exception.

From that point of view, there is one most important idea to be kept in mind at all times - and this is the concept of moderation, or balance, applying to life as much as food for life. Diet advice - which confirms the popular concept of 'portion control' - is that, at any one time, we should not eat more food than we can hold in our two hands cupped together.

"When eating, keep some appetite for the next meal – feel Fresh and Light after every meal, not Heavy. Only fresh whole foods contain the vital energies of nature on which human health depends – this is why modern diets, deprived of all their living energies through factory processing and artificial additives, fail to deliver the sort of essential energies the human body needs to function properly." Tibetan doctor, Men Zee Khang, Dharamsala, India.

Tibetan medicine warns that fish and meat eaten together in one meal cause digestive upsets – different parts of the stomach must process the different substances, leading to indigestion and heartburn.

Diet for The Earth Nature



The Post-digestive Taste (internal body condition) for Earth is Sweet

The Sweet Taste is Heavy and Cool, reflecting the Earth Humoural Nature

It is said that the Earth Nature CONSUMES Sweet, which is to say that if the Nature of Earth is already Sweet, then it is too easy to increase the Sweet taste - until it becomes excessive in the body - indicating a strong danger of diabetes.

The Sweet, Cold and Oily characteristics of the Earth Nature are pacified (alleviated) by Sour, Salty and Hot food Tastes. And Rough, Light and Dry Qualities of foods complement the Blunt, Heavy and Damp Secondary qualities of Earth.

Food Tastes: Sour, Salty and Hot Tastes pacify the Cold and Damp characteristics of Earth Nature

Food Qualities: Rough, Light, Dry and Warm qualities neutralise the Blunt, Heavy and Sticky Earth characteristics

The **Secondary Qualities** of Fatlessness and Thinness complete the picture

The Object of the Earth Nature diet is to HEAT the Cold Phelgm constitution, to LIGHTEN Earth's Heaviness and to DRY the Damp Earth system

The Earth Nature is the only one able to tolerate missing meals without feeling mentally overactive, dizzy and light-headed.

Food Tastes to Pacify The Earth Nature

Sour, Salty, Hot

Sour – the Sour Taste is Warming

All the sour fruits: chief among these is Pomegranate – the Warming qualities of which are especially prized by Tibetans when treating the Phelgm Humour, and containing as it does the additional and desirable characteristic of Lightness. Sour-tasting fruits such as gooseberries, rhubarb, grapefruit, prunes, cherries, cranberries, pineapple, grapefruit, green grapes, green apples, lemons and oranges. Brussels sprouts are sour in nature. Cheeses - but not the thick and oil-rich cheeses such as Roquefort, Stilton and mascarpone. Earth Natures should choose a drier cheese such as parmesan. Yoghurt and buttermilk. Hot and sour soup, cumin-flavoured dishes, beer. Vinegar and pickles.

Salty – the Salt Taste is Warming

Salt improves Digestive Heat and since Earth is deficient in this area, a small amount of salt in the diet (sea salt only) will help to Warm the Cold Phelgm constitution. Since salt also has the characteristic of Heaviness – Earth Natures must be careful to be sparing.

Produce from the sea, fish, especially smoked fish such as kippers, and salt itself. Japanese food uses seaweed or kelp, a good source of salt. Canned sardines, tuna. Anchovies and olives. Smoked meat products such as bacon – grilled is best for Earth Natures, ham, sausages. Marmite, Vegemite.

Miso soup is good as is soy sauce – oily, salty and heavy.

Earth Natures should not follow the current dietary advice to cut salt out of the diet completely. In common with contemporary thinking though, care should be taken to ensure that not too much salt is being consumed in a regular diet. Whilst its heating properties are indicated in the case of Earth's Cold nature, too much salt can lead to water retention, especially bad for Earth Natures, as well as high blood pressure. As with all things moderation is the key.

Hot – the Hot Taste is Heating

All Hot and Spicy foods. Indian and Thai curries, Mexican chillies (Earth's stronger constitution can take more heat than those of the Air or Fire Nature) black pepper and especially cayenne are stimulating to the sluggish Earth system. Mustard and all mustard products. Onions and garlic. The English heating spices such as cinnamon, ginger, cloves, nutmeg, horseradish, Worcestershire sauce, pickles.

Traditional Tibetan advice recommends all foods grown in a hot, dry and sunny environment are helpful for both Earth and Air Natures.



Food Qualities to Pacify The Earth Nature

Light, Rough, Dry and Warm

Light and Dry

Honey is excellent for Earth Natures - beloved by the ancient Greeks and 'almost a pharmacy in itself'. It has all the three qualities of Warmth, Lightness and Dryness. Poultry – chicken and turkey - is Light and Dry. Goats cheese is Light and Rough, as is mozzarella. Celery, kiwi fruit, bilberries, blueberries, nectarines. Muesli is excellent for Earth – Light, Rough and Dry with Warming dried fruits. Low fat or soy or rice milk though. All beans: borlotti, cannellini, chickpeas, endame and quinoa are Light and Dry. Ham such as prosciutto (pork is Cold in nature) are very suitable for Earth.

Rough

Capsicum - green and red peppers are used almost in a medical application for Earth Natures, both strongly having the two characteristics of Light and Rough. Pork, goat and rabbit are Light and Rough – but also Cool. Tea and coffee are both Light and Rough and are well tolerated by the Heavy and Smooth Earth constitution. Fruits such as apples, pears, guava, grapes and grapefruit, strawberries, raspberries, lemon, pineapples and melons, and vegetables such as cucumber, celery, courgettes, cauliflower, carrots, endive, peas. Dried fruits and non-Oily nuts such as almonds are Light and Rough. Hummus is ideal having all the qualities of Lightness, Roughness, and Warmth.

Warmth

Here there must be a special mention of garlic. Almost in the same category as honey, garlic has been seen as a kind of 'wonder food' since ancient times. Its applications range from internal – generally warming and cleansing the whole body system, to external - for acne and even as a mosquito repellent! Garlic is a natural antioxidant, said to ward off free radicals and claimed to control cholesterol, but where Earth Natures are concerned, it's Warmth is it's most vital asset.

Pomegranate is considered a special antidote to the Earth Nature. If fresh pomegranates are not available, pomegranate juice or supplements are helpful.

Lamb, game meat, and eggs are warming. The green 'superfoods' – broccoli, spring greens, green beans – have all the qualities of Thinness and Lightness and are Rough and Warming. Fish is excellent for Earth - both Warm and Light. Earth Natures can lightly fry fresh fillet rolled in flour and herbs with fresh green vegetables - good for blood cleansing. Grilled tomatoes and bacon. Pulses and beans are Warming when used in stews and casseroles, and lentil soup, with onions, garlic. All oils are Warming and mustard seed oil is particularly Warming as is sesame seed oil. (It should be noted that oils should be used in moderation only, since in addition to their Warming properties, they are also Heavy). Mediterranean herbs such as basil, tarragon, oregano and marjoram, sage and thyme are Warming. Cardamom is seen by Tibetans as the special Warming spice for the Stomach and Spleen. Dates and liquorice are Sweet and Warm. Fennel is Warming as is lettuce and caraway seeds are heating. Spring onions, leeks, horseradish. Roasted root vegetables such as turnips, parsnips and Swedes, and butternut squash. Barley and maize/corn (polenta) are Warming. All foods grown in hot sunny environments are considered to contain the properties of Warmth and Dryness.

Foods lightly cooked in oil can be very beneficial for Phelgm. Keeping them light and fairly dry, using very little oil, the nature of food cooked by this method is very warming.

Secondary Food Qualities to Pacify The Earth Nature

Fatlessness and Thinness

Pulses such as chickpeas, haricot beans, lentils, kidney beans, aduki beans and other foods with little or no fat content, cereal products such as couscous, polenta, corn, rice noodles. Feta and cottage cheese. Tuna in brine. Fruits such as watermelon, strawberries, raspberries, pears and oranges, limes in particular have the additional quality of Thinness. Coriander (used sparingly, Coriander is Cool in nature) and Parsley are both Thin and also excellent Blood Cleansers. All legumes – beans, lentils have the qualities of Fatlessness and Thinness. Cranberries have excellent cleansing qualities, and although their Lightness and Roughness is suitable for Earth, in large quantities their Cold nature will be detrimental.

In general, Earth Natures should avoid at all costs fatty type foods, looking out for those carrying a 'low-fat' description.



Food Tastes which Aggravate The Earth Nature

Sweet, Bitter, Astringent

Sweet

This is the category to which all Earth Natures should pay particular attention. The real danger zone. As Sweet is the basic condition of the Phelgm Humour, and inherent in the Earth/Water body, all sugars should be avoided where possible. Natural sugars, such as fructose, and honey are

In addition, sugar is intrinsically Cold and has the quality of Heaviness. Both to be avoided by Earth Natures. Tibetans preferred, and advocated, the use of raw cane sugar, or molasses – now perhaps old-fashioned malt syrup could substitute. But all of these can be Heavy too, so honey is a more suitable choice for sweetening. Remember though that all sweet products in excess may lead to water retention – always a strong possibility for Earth Natures.

All Sweet, sugary foods, including the Sweet and Heavy flour products, breads, cakes, biscuits, pastries, pasta. It should be noted that wheat is itself Sweet and Heavy in nature, whilst rye flour is not. Milk and milk products are Sweet in nature. The naturally Sweet properties of raisin and date are used in traditional Chinese medicine to alleviate Air and Fire problems and grapes fall into this category. Sweet fruits such as peaches, nectarines and apricots should be taken in moderation by Earth Natures. In the same category are the naturally Sweet vegetables such as carrots and butternut squash, pumpkin, parsnips, turnips and sweet potatoes. Cabbage and cauliflower are indicated by Tibetans to be particularly Sweet and Cold. Mushrooms and aubergine are Sweet and Smooth – two qualities to avoid. Red meat is said to be Sweet.

Drinks such as sweetened fizzy drinks and the Sweet liquors such as sweet sherry, Marsala wine, sweet cocktail mixes, and the creamy dessert drinks should be avoided. Most milk chocolate is Sweet, Smooth and Oily, but dark chocolate, and particularly products high in cocoa are the right choice for Earth Natures.

Bitter

Tea and coffee. Coffee, although Bitter and Cooling, also has a strong quality of Roughness, and can be helpful for Earth Natures in moderation. Radicchio lettuce and rhubarb are both Bitter. Broccoli and grapefruit. Melon, all gourds, fenugreek, basil and all dark green leafy ‘greens’.

Astringent

Cranberries, grapefruit, vinegar and anything pickled in vinegar. Green apple juice, gherkins and pickled onions. Lemon juice. Cider. All unripe fruit and vegetables and excess of uncooked vegetables, especially salad.

Food Qualities which Aggravate The Earth Nature

Cool, Oily, Heavy, Smooth, Fatty and Raw

Cool

All unripe fruit and vegetables - especially raw tomatoes should be avoided by Earth Natures being both very Cold and Rough. Oats are both Cool and Heavy.

Unboiled milk is Heavy and Cool. Bananas are Heavy, Damp, Cool and Oily and Earth Natures should be careful to include these in their diet sparingly. Apples and pears are Cold and Heavy when Raw. With red meat, both beef and pork are considered to be Cool, whilst lamb is Warm in nature. When selecting a meal containing red meat, it is best for Earth Natures to avoid Beef and Pork, and choose the warmer Lamb instead.

Mushrooms are particularly unsuitable for Earth, having all the qualities of Cool, Damp and Smooth. And Radishes are one of the Coldest vegetables. Cranberries, although Light and Rough, have a strong quality of Cool to Cold, and should be approached with caution by Earth Natures. Asparagus is particularly Cool, also Heavy and Moist as is avocado. Cold drinks and drinks which has been refrigerated are not suitable for Earth Natures. It is not advisable to use ice in drinks. Ice-cream only occasionally.

Oily

Oily nuts such as walnuts or brazils, peanut butter, soy sauce, tofu, butter, both Oily and Heavy - the alternative spreads such as those made with olive oil or other ‘low in cholesterol’ types should be used instead of butter - and all fried foods, oily fish such as mackerel, kippers and salmon. Many cheeses can be Oily, particularly the processed variety. All oils used for cooking are said to be Heating – Earth Natures should choose sesame oil where possible for its Light and warming qualities– light and nutritious. Olive oil is a better choice than other oils.

Peanut butter is both Oily and Heating.

Heavy and Damp

Asparagus is particularly bad for Earth, being Cool, Heavy and Wet. Avocados are similarly Heavy and Damp as well as being Smooth. Radish is another danger food for Earth – being so Cold as to be used as medicine in the Tibetan system. Aubergine (eggplant) is considered by Tibetans to have the qualities of Heaviness and Dampness.

Spinach and other foods having strong element of Earth – which is both Heavy, Damp and Cold should be avoided. Choosing these foods means that the Heavy Damp and Cold qualities already inherent in the Earth Nature will be amplified and increased. This includes: all root vegetables, potatoes, cabbages, cauliflowers, Brussels sprouts, swedes, turnips, and carrots which also have the added complication of sweetness.

Earth individuals should include cheese in their diet only sparingly. Cheese is Oily, Heavy, Sweet and Smooth and therefore highly aggravating to the Phlegm Humour. Lighter cheeses such as parmesan, mozzarella and goats cheese are preferable to the cheeses with a higher fat content, such as cheddar, brie, camembert, Roquefort etc.

Rice is Heavy and Cool. Grains - wheat and particularly oats are problematic for Earth Natures, being Damp and Heavy. Oat Porridge is Cold and Heavy and Phelgm Natures are advised not to include it in their diet on a regular basis. Try to find dried or roasted grains which are lighter and

warmer in nature also those grown in warmer countries. Cornmeal (polenta) makes a good substitute.

Smooth

Dairy produce, cream, cheese, milk, tofu. Cheeses should be selected from the drier, low-fat varieties – mozzarella, goats cheese, parmesan, cottage cheese. Rich and fatty types like Roquefort, and the blue cheeses such as Danish and gorgonzola should be avoided at all costs, and cheeses such as camembert and brie eaten only

Fatty

Fat meats, bacon, animal fats, butter, full-cream milk and cream products.

Raw

No raw foods or salads! Salad is especially unsuitable for Earth Natures, being extremely Cold. Far better to use the Tibetan way with salad greens, and consume them lightly steamed. This removes the Cold qualities and transforms the food into something Warm and easily digestible, suitable for both Earth and Air Natures. Raw fruits have Heavy, indigestible qualities. Remember that Radishes are used in a medical application in Tibetan medicine, where Cold natured qualities are required.

Earth Natures should avoid at all costs eating raw tomatoes. A raw tomato is the most indigestible food stuff being Cold, Thin, Sharp, Rough – hard on any system except Hot natured Fire. And even here, consumed indiscriminately, the Thin, Sharp and Rough qualities will irritate Fire. However, tomatoes are beneficial as a food when cooked, so gently sautéing in olive oil will change the undesirable nature of this food into something easily digested.

Traditionally, Tibetans recommend that both Earth and Air Natures should not drink cold water, it should always be boiled. If this doesn't appeal, then at least make sure to avoid ice-cold drinks – it is felt that extremes of either Hot or Cold fan the Air Humour - always present, if not predominant, in all three Humoural Natures and open the body to invading disease.

Cool and Light foods can be made Hot and Heavy by frying (sauteed).

Frying can be good for Cool/Cold Earth Natures as part of a balanced diet if small quantities of a Warm oil, such as sesame are used. Food can be made nutritious and Warm by this method.

Stale foods - 'leftovers', decrease digestive heat, which has an adverse effect on the body's ability to process the nutriments from food. In fact, a strong digestive heat, Tibetan medicine advises, is the cornerstone of a healthy constitution, able to overcome the worst of ills in daily life. It is when the digestive heat is weak that the body's elements go out of balance, and disease is able to enter our system. Earth and Air Natures, having the qualities of Cool to Cold, should particularly avoid keeping leftovers for later consumption.

It should also be remembered that over-consumption of 'Earth-type' foods – Cool, Heavy, Sweet, i.e. bread, dairy, cold and/or raw foods are said to lead to increased dullness of thought, in addition to problems with weight.



Beverages for The Earth Nature

Non-Alcoholic drinks

Tea and coffee, Light and Rough are suitable for Earth Natures, especially coffee. Of all the Three Humoural Natures, Earth is better suited to regular coffee consumption; it elevates and energises as well as being Light and Rough. The strong and Heavy Earth constitution will accept the caffeine 'high' and find it beneficial. Heating herbal teas with cinnamon, clove, nutmeg etc. such as the Indian 'yogi teas', or the Chinese 'Emperors' mix both contain Warming spices. Indian masala chai is a good example. Nettle tea stimulates heat and the Rough and Thin qualities of strawberry, raspberry and berry herbal fruit teas are well suited to Earth.

Earth Natures should avoid at all times full-fat cow's milk, including cream. Nothing is more likely to increase the physical phlegm condition in the body. Low-fat cow's milk, soy milk or rice milk is a better choice. Likewise full-fat milk or ice-cream-based smoothies or milkshakes are unsuitable, unsweetened fruit juice mixes make a better choice for Phelgm Humoural Natures.

Cider and cider vinegar, lemon and honey, and a piece of ginger in warm boiled water is traditionally advocated for everyone in the cold month of Winter. (It should be remembered that Tibetan medicine specifically advises against using iced water. Extremely Cold liquids are said to accelerate disorders and to spread them quickly around the body).

Alcoholic Drinks

Earth Natures should avoid the Thick, Sweet and Heavy liquors such as port, sweet sherry, muscatel or the sweet and creamy brandy/chocolate/caramel mixes and sweet fruity cocktails –traditionally thought to lead to the very Earth condition of gout! The Thin, Warming liquids such as aged whisky, brandy and the Pungent quality of gin is well suited for Earth individuals.

Mulled wine, old red wine with heating spices and honey, aged liquors, whisky and brandy are excellent for the Cold Earth constitution. Lager is better than draught beer for Earth types, being Thin, Sharp and Rough.

The Thick and Heavy Earth constitution with its quality of SOLIDITY has a greater tolerance for alcohol than either Air or Fire, and this should be borne in mind since it is easy for those with Earth Natures to appear unaffected by alcohol consumption, whilst the other two will more quickly become overwhelmed and display the effects of heavy drinking.

Conclusions for Earth Natures

To Heat - the Cool, Damp Earth/Water constitution

Earth Natures should ideally not eat salads, or raw vegetables at all. Adopt the Tibetan or Chinese method of gently steaming vegetables. Such lightly cooked foods ideally exemplify the object of Lightening the Heavy Earth system whilst avoiding the Cold and Rough qualities of uncooked food. If it proves impossible to resist salad in summer, then keep it to a minimum. Earth Natures must control their intake of sweet foods at all costs. The Sweet Taste is post-digestively Cooling (as well as being Heavy),

And Hot/spicy food tastes will energise and invigorate blood circulation in the Earth/Water system which tends to Stagnation, the root cause of many disorders, including those of the Mind.

To make Salty - Salty Taste is Warming

Salt strengthens and enlivens the sluggish Earth system by increasing Digestive Heat. The popular

opinion that salt intake should be entirely eliminated does not agree with Tibetan thought, which is that all foods and substances have their place in a well-balanced diet. It is only overindulgence (or loss of balance) in one or more food items or groups, that causes problems, and understanding and practising the advice for the Three Humoural Natures will help to avoid this.

To Dry - the Damp Cold Earth/Water system

If not actively dried, should not be further moistened by the use of 'Wet' type foods – foods cooked with liquids. Grilling, baking and light frying is best.

Therefore, Heating (using Sour, Salty and Spicy Taste as well as physical heat), to Energise and Dry, remembering the qualities of Lightness and Roughness - is the recommended approach for Earth Natures.

Cuisine suggestions for Earth Natures

A Thai type cuisine is ideal for the Earth Nature constitution. Relatively Light and Thin, Spicy to Hot, low on starches and oil, and with very little dairy, and customarily consumed a little at a time, often, so avoiding the Heavy, lethargic effect of sitting down to a large, starch filled meal. The Northern Indian (tandoori) cuisine is Dry, Hot and Light, ideal for Earth. The hot dishes of Mexico and even the national dish of Bhutan, the chilli-heavy ema-datsi, are well-tolerated by Earth.

A Japanese diet is also indicated for Earth Natures - being Light and easy to digest, strongly featuring fish and salty products such as soy and miso to feed the Kidney which can be prone to weakness in Phelgm Natures. However, it should be remembered rice is cold and heavy, so not too much.

Behaviour for The Earth Nature

Sedentary lifestyle creates Phelgm disorders. Avoid getting cold and wet, sitting in damp places (trad.)

Energetic activity, modify sleeping patterns, actively seek new ways of thought and behaviour. Avoid overeating and keep warm at all times. Those Earth creatures of habit should endeavour to break those habits! Step out of the comfort zone!

Earth Natures should always bear in mind the need to liven up and energise, both mentally and physically. To get moving! The Earth body needs to become lighter, faster, warmer and drier and an active lifestyle with regular physical effort will increase both circulation and digestive fire. At all times Earth should keep the body warm and dry and take precautions against dampness. Avoid being soaked in the rain, don't sit around in damp places, dry off after swimming and don't get cold whilst still wet. Wrap up warmly when the weather is cold or damp. Don't sit working at a desk in cold, unheated rooms (especially for long periods). Earth Natures should dry off after the body is wet from exertion after exercise and avoid feeling chilled at all times.

Earth people tend to be creatures of habit and should try to re-energise and re-invigorate their minds by cultivating new experiences which expand their horizons, whether an unexplored corner of the world, a new subject to explore, or perhaps take up belly-dancing! And learn about the culture around it.

Don't oversleep! This advice for Earth types is strongly emphasised in Tibetan medicine. Earth Natures especially must guard against lying in bed and sleeping for too long. Limit sleeping at night to not more than eight hours maximum, and no afternoon naps except in special cases – the tendency is for Earth Natures to sleep too much - leading to more lethargy and weight gain and further slowing the circulation, after which a host of problems may follow.

Lifestyle Activities for The Earth Nature

Earth Natures should engage in regular, fairly strenuous exercise (trad.)

The Earth constitution is strong, and the characteristics of Slowness and Heaviness mean Earth Natures can sustain strenuous exercise for longer periods than other two Humoural types. Good blood circulation is important for everyone, but in the case of Earth Natures it is particularly important to keep moving; Earth's sluggish system will lead to all kinds of minor ills which can be avoided by regular exercise which means not only improved circulation but improved mental abilities, including a more positive attitude. More energy means better outlook, brighter mind and health problems of the physical body alleviated. And the closed-mindedness, or narrow focus which Tibetans feel blights the otherwise good Earth energy will be neutralised.

At the gym, aerobic cardiovascular exercise, working with weights, running – try taking on a marathon! Soccer, rugby, tennis, trekking in the mountains, mountain-biking. Squash, a hard tennis game. 'Thrill-seeking' type pursuits will kick-start the sluggish Earth system: para-sailing, scuba-diving, white-water rafting, dune-surfing. Martial arts such as Karate, Tae kwon do, Aikido, kick-boxing. On a beach holiday, vigorous games of volley-ball or windsurfing will tone Earth both mentally and physically. Don't just lie there!

It is a good idea for Earth Natures, if possible to work with a personal trainer to overcome any disinclination for exercise setting in and to KEEP EARTH MOVING

Careers for The Earth Nature

Anything requiring steady application, study and learning. Not too much change or challenge on a regular basis. Established routines. Earth types should not seek jobs where initiative, innovation and quick thinking are needed - rather a steady approach, reliable and diligent. Their evident good-nature, easy and approachable manner lends itself to professions where these can be a definite advantage, such as counselling, facilitating, mediating, or welcoming roles

Doctor, lawyer, teacher, social worker, nurse, therapist, psychiatrist, psychologist, counsellor, facilitator, mediator, human resources manger, cook/chef, restaurant owner, hotel owner, banker, stockbroker, landscape gardener, researcher, civil servant, weaver, potter.

Best Environment for The Earth Nature

Hot and dry, high hills. Warm, dry, scrubby, typical southern Mediterranean climates. Areas where there is CLARITY! And Warmth! High, bright, dry, exposed – energizing! Dry the dampness and enliven the mind with clear sunny days. Lots of opportunities for easy access to exercise, walk out and go!

Good places for Earth Natures

The Mediterranean areas of France, of Italy, Spain and Greece. South Africa, Central Australia, the West Coast of U.S.A. Morocco and Tunisia. Earth Natures should also feel well in Middle Eastern countries such as Egypt, Dubai, Oman. South American countries such as Brazil and Argentina.

Earth Natured people enjoy cities. The intense energy of major cities with people rushing and traffic everywhere has a stimulating, enlivening effect on the sluggish Earth system.

Problem places for Earth Natures

Cold and Damp countries like the British Isles (especially Scotland and Eire), Belgium and Holland. Areas of Northern Europe. North-western USA and West coast of Canada. Tropical countries in monsoon, such as India, Sri Lanka, Thailand. Grey and cold climates such as those of Scandinavia and Finland.






Treatments And Therapies for The Earth Nature

'Work-out' type massages such as sports massage, deep tissue massage such as the Chinese Shiatsu or Tui Na. The strong Thai massage is ideal for Earth Natures, stimulating the circulation and generally moving all the body's elements. Saunas are very well indicated for Earth – both the Dryness and Heat helping to correct Earth's Cool and Damp constitution. Steam treatments are not recommended as the Phelgm Humour is already Damp. Warming rubs such as the traditional Tibetan treatment, meant for a cold climate, which uses tsampa, or barley flour as a rubdown, would be excellent for Earth. The modern equivalent would be salt rubs, or crushed fruit seed rubs. Acupuncture is an excellent therapy in terms of moving the 'chi' which tends to be sluggish with Earth Natures. Moxabustion (traditional Tibetan - application of heated aromatic medicinal smoke) on specific points is ideal and 'Hot Stone' therapy is also good for Earth people.

Earth is the Humoural Nature best able to tolerate, and benefit from invasive and 'rough' treatments such as colonic irrigation. In fact, this can be extremely helpful for the Earth constitution, veering as it does towards stagnation – a condition in Eastern thought to be avoided at all costs, and applying equally to a physical condition as to a mental state. It should be noted that traditional Tibetan teachings recommend Autumn as the time for such treatments to be undertaken, when the Season – with its qualities of Earth and Water, and the quality of 'falling down' (of leaves and fruits, to branches and roots) corresponds to the nature of the treatments, and best results can be obtained.



Interiors for The Earth Nature

Colourful, bright, lively



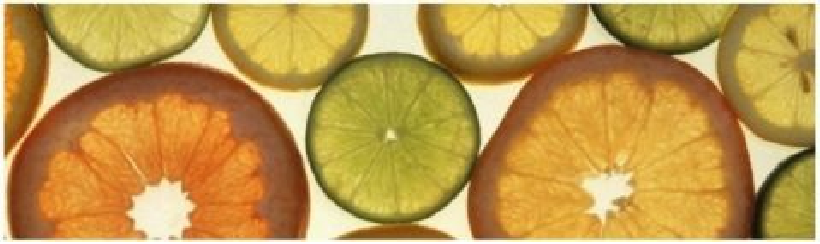
Earth Natures need stimulation in their surroundings. Interiors should be light, bright and colourful. Vibrant primaries – red, blue and yellow. Energizing colours such as acid yellow and leaf green, plus strong orange, intense bright pink make an ideal colour scheme for Earth. Large, bold patterns on wallpaper, at least on one wall, with light beech or pine woods and bright or deep toned rugs on floors. Lots of brightly coloured cushions, shiny wooden floors. Pale woods such as beech or pine create a cheerful, light interior. A Scandinavian approach to room treatment is ideal for Earth people – not too much furniture, lots of space to create an airy, upbeat atmosphere, and plenty of room to move around. Windows can be large, with blinds to maximise light, the slatted type are excellent for Earth Natures, adding pattern and the impression of movement as glimpses of the exterior continually change with movement around the room. Alternatively, light white curtains to blow in the breeze and create movement.

Mirrors for an Earth interior - to energize and bring bright light into the rooms. Strategically placed mirrors will bring the outside in, colourful posters, prints or paintings in light frames, and sufficient lighting at various levels around the rooms to create brightness and variety without being glaring. Earth Natures usually enjoy cooking, so a colourful, streamlined and clutter-free model is best, clean lines and laminates in a strong colour – Italian kitchens are good for this - and open plan with a large table nearby, so guests can sit around and chat whilst the host prepares the food. Earth people are relaxed enough for this!

If the strong colours recommended seem too extreme - softer tones of the colours suggested can be used.

Room Scenting for The Earth Nature

Energising, sharp, clear




Burning incense may be too enervating for Earth Natures, creating as it does a Thicker, Heavier environment. The same applies to candles. Aromatherapy oils are best for Earth Natures, set in containers around the room.

The sharp ‘ozone’ or ‘green’ fragrances. Clear and clean scents.

Juniper, Pine, ‘Ho’ Leaf. Tea tree, eucalyptus, red thyme, bergamot, basil, rosemary, clary-sage. Ginger, geranium, grapefruit, mandarin orange, lime. Vetiver, lemongrass. Thai benzoin (resin).

Medicinal Herbs for The Earth Nature



These European herbs (and some Asian) have been chosen for their close approximation to their Tibetan counterpart:

Pomegranate is given pride of place in this category. Tibetans hold the pomegranate in highest regard for its Warming and invigorating properties which make it ideal for Earth Natures. In addition to Warming, it has Rough and Light qualities which exactly complement those required to counteract the Phelgm Humour.

Ginseng is strongly Heating, and of the Three Humoural Natures is best suited to Earth (and not at all suitable for Fire Natures – which are already Hot

Cayenne is excellent for the strong stimulation it gives the sluggish Earth circulation

Melissa (Lemon balm) strengthens the Spleen

White Mustard Seed warms the Lungs and clears physical phlegm

Elderflower is a stimulant

Yarrow (which directly corresponds to its Tibetan counterpart) is known to increase circulation

Ginkgo (biloba) also encourages stimulation of the blood

Hawthorn is also a blood stimulant

Horsetail and **Juniper** have a diuretic action in the case of water retention

Since Arthritis is thought to be influenced by both the Air and Phelgm humours, Frankincense, Myrrh, and Devil's Claw have been found to help alleviate the symptoms of pain and swelling

Note: Ingestion of medicine should correlate to the time at which the problem humour is most aggravated, i.e. for Earth – morning; for Fire Natures – noon and for Air Natures – evening.

The 'Food Spices'



All the hot Indian spices. Black Pepper, Ginger, Nutmeg, Cardamom, Clove, Cinnamon. Fenugreek and Saffron are Warming, and Turmeric is active where there is stagnation in the body. Garlic, like Honey, is another ‘all purpose’ natural food – being highly nutritious and having protective, healing and cleansing properties.

In general, Earth Natures should look for Energy-giving, Warming and Tonic herbs and supplements.

(see Endnote)

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2 THE FIRE NATURE

The Nature of FIRE is the MIND and the BLOOD



FIRE is the Heating properties within the body and the FIRE Humour carries with it the sense of the Liver and the involvement of Bile.

The Fire Humour provides the all-important component of digestive heat, essential for a strong constitution, and brings strength of purpose, determination and sharp intelligence

The Fire Qualities are Light, Odorous, Purging, Moist and Fast

Fire Heat is said to 'ascend', it's lightness moving quickly upwards towards the Head, causing disturbances such as frequent headaches. The other qualities describe the traditional Tibetan analysis of the typical Fire Nature, not necessarily only the physical body

The Fire Characteristic is Oily which is Hot (the Oily Earth Nature is Cool)

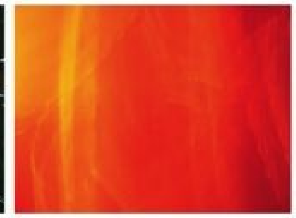
The Fire Symbol is the Tiger

Sharp minds and fierce spirit. Strong and proud, quick thinking and alert, Fire Natures typify the attributes of the Tiger

The Fire Colour is Red

The colour of passion, hot blood and exuberance, the power of the sun, the Element of Fire



The Fire Taste (body constitution) is Sour which is Heating

The Location of Fire in the Body

The Fire Humour resides in the Middle part of the body, anger is generated there and the body's Heat (the Triple Burner of Chinese medicine) is located there. Physically, the Upper Abdomen, the lining of the Liver and the Duodenal path are all involved. The Ligaments and Tendons are usually associated with Fire.

The Fire energy is said to be 'ascending', to flare upwards, like flames, so the Head is also involved in the Fire system where the body's Heat will make itself felt, causing aggression and disturbances. Strong, throbbing headaches that suddenly begin, and migraines, are Fire disorders.

The Fire Organs

Fire is dominated by: the Liver - storehouse of the Blood and the body's Energy. Also the Gall Bladder (Bile is strongly associated with Fire) and the Small Intestine. Many health problems experienced by Fire Natures will involve these organs.

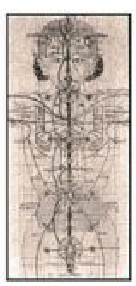
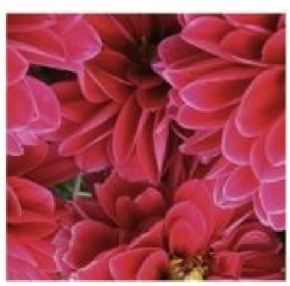
However, it is the Heart which is at the 'heart' of the Fire Nature. Although the Heart is traditionally placed with the Air Humour in Tibetan medicine, this tends to mean it's emotional characteristic. The physical aspect of the Heart belongs with the Fire Humour, dominated as it is by the red blood and the driving life-force. Here in the Fire Nature, the Heart plays its dominant role, and the strength of the Heart can be seen in the Eyes, their brightness, openness and directness of gaze. Fire Natures will be aware of problems concerning the health of their heart from a relatively early age.

The Fire 'Flower'

The 'Flower' of the Fire Organs is the Eyes. The Fire energy is responsible for vision – it's clarity and strength. When there is a problem with physical 'seeing' the Liver (the chief Fire Organ) is usually weakened.

To Balance The Fire Nature

Tibetan medicine seeks to Cool and Dry the Hot and Moist Fire body and to make Heavier and Slow down the Fast and Purging Fire system. And to introduce some measures to calm the over-active Fire MIND.


The Fire Nature and the Three Ages of Man and Woman

Adult

Tibetan thought traditionally attributes the Three Humoural Natures to Three Ages of Man/Woman

Fire is the energy associated with the Adult, and Fire is said to represent the middle stage of life, when man or woman experiences the full-flowering of the self and the consolidation of work. When the body is at its strongest, and mind is honed and forceful, the 'prime of life'. The body's constitution and the mind's abilities are at their peak. The Fire Humour is said traditionally to be ACCOMPLISHMENT and this is implied in the powerful gathering and presence of the human body in its wholeness at this time of life.

The Fire Nature and Time of Arisal

When the Fire Nature is aggravated and needs special attention

Daily: Noon and Midnight

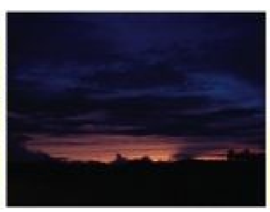
The Fire Humour is at its height at mid-day. For this reason efforts should be made to calm down, settle into something relaxing and stop activity. As mid-day is also lunchtime, this is a good time to take time out to eat, quietly and calmly. On no account should lunch be eaten 'on the run' and caffeine drinks such as coffee and other caffeine 'pick-up' drinks should be very much avoided at this time. If Fire Natures indulge in this behaviour, bad effects will be felt in the afternoon, such as headaches, indigestion and a general feeling of stress and tiredness. Of particular importance to the fast Fire Nature is the need to eat slowly, concentrating on each mouthful. The Zen adage 'eat when you eat, sleep when you sleep' is especially apt here – Fire Natures tend to do everything in a rush, thinking ahead all the time - and this applies to any activity, not just that of eating.

The aspect of midnight applies to Fire Natures needing their sleep and being aware of physical and mental tiredness at this time, even if they do not want to call it a day.

Seasonal: Summer

The Fire Humour is at its strongest during the Hot and Oily conditions of Summer. Fire Natures should try to keep the bodies cool and aim for quiet minds during warm or hot summer days. Avoid getting too hot in the sun, and at all costs make sure direct heat does not fall on the top of the Head – a most vulnerable area for the Fire Nature which is prone to headaches and migraines.

See the Diet section for Fire-pacifying foods.


The Fire Nature Appearance

Fire Natures look lean and athletic, with strong, reddish toned colouring, thick hair and medium build. They have a forceful appearance, and their gaze is firm and direct. Their eyes can sometimes betray the signs of an overheated body system, in that they have a bulging quality. A clear sign of a Fire Nature is in their complexion – usually there is a high colour and an abundance of healthy shine. The look of rude health!

An attribute of the Fire Humour is Fast – and Fire Natures have this look about them – they will be irritable if not quickly understood, frown and move on – both mentally and physically – usually much faster than those around them. Their strong constitution allows plenty of physical exertion, and they can leave others standing – they themselves rarely stand still.

The Fire speech is fluent and fast.

The Fire Nature Personality



Powerhouse

Fire Natures tend to be very intelligent, competitive, have enormous determination to achieve goals and are fearless in their approach to life. They are ambitious and organized but also tend have a strong capacity for the less desirable qualities of aggression, jealousy and anger. They can be possessive, short-tempered and irritable but also - active, dominant, forceful - all the leadership qualities. They are usually very ambitious and can be ruthless in pursuit of what they want. Self-confident and courageous, but Fire Natures can be prone to moodiness when things don't go their way. Traditionally, Tibetans attribute the quality of ELIMINATION to Fire.

Fire individuals are said to possess 'great hunger and thirst'. Whilst this was intended as a description of their physical constitution, it can equally be applied to the Fire Nature Personality. People with this Nature do have a great hunger and thirst for everything – love, material success, wealth, status, and the symbols of status. Challenge is the meat of life and Fire Natures will be lost if there is nothing to aim for. They are not prepared to fade into the background! Fire Natures have an element of the show-off in the make-up, they are concerned to present a memorable image of themselves to the world, and their interest in fashion and the latest gadgets reflects this aspect of Fire.

Fire Natures do everything fast – and are people of extremes. They have enormous enthusiasm and the ability to enthuse those around them – their social skills are excellent and they enjoy sociability generally. They are quick to embrace new ideas, and easily grasp new concepts. Fire Natures are characterised by MIND and have a particular affinity for technical and scientific subjects. Whilst this quick and fast characteristic is shared to a certain extent with Air Natures, with Fire it is more sustained and less erratic. Where Air Natures tend to flit about from one thing to another, Fire is more likely, when engaged by a subject, to grasp it fully and stay with it, seeing it through to successful completion. Fire Natures like to set goals and achieve them. Fire has great determination and a great deal of energy to make their goals reality. They are very positive, and have a look of sharp intelligence. They have little patience with the slower approach of more cautious individuals, and interaction between, for example, Earth and Fire Natures can be problematic. Quick-witted, impatient, irritable - particularly when others are not as quick to understand – Fire Natures should try to develop patience.

The Fire personality can have too much pride which means he or she finds it hard to listen to others

and hear and accept their views. Being judgmental of others, feeling their own attitude is always right does not make for a harmonious relationship or a co-operative work situation. A result of this is that Fire individuals can be controlling – of partners, the situation around them, and this can particularly apply to financial matters too. And it is very difficult for Fire people to admit their mistakes, something that would be valuable for their own development, in addition to smoothing the way with those around them. Fire Natures should try to learn tolerance and acceptance of other people's views.

Fire Natures are very passionate – in all aspects of life. Everything they take on will be embraced to the hilt and whilst passionate about everything they love, their Fire Natures are very passionate – in all aspects of life. Everything they take on will be embraced to the hilt and whilst passionate about everything they love, their dislikes are equally strong. Anger, Jealousy and Lust, are all qualities associated with Fire, and Fire Natures must learn to control their anger and aggression. They are hot-tempered and due to their fire-like nature, they can easily become overwhelmed and consumed by the strong feelings of anger or frustration. The danger with this 'all or nothing' approach is that the Fire individuals can be over-positive in terms of the accomplishment of any idea, strategy, plan – or person! Brooking no denial, they ride roughshod over obstacles in their path, even blinding themselves to the reality of a situation. Whilst this attitude may seem harmless, or even desirable in certain circumstances, the downside is that, if things (or people) fail to live up to expectation, Fire Natures are able to discard just as energetically as they pursued, whereas a more balanced approach could have saved the situation.

Fire Natures can be ruthless in pursuit of their goals. While this has obvious advantages in certain work situations and may initially seem attractive to a potential partner, Fire Natures are bad losers (pride), and can harbour deep feelings (every feeling is deep for Fire) of resentment that things did not go their way. They will not easily give up on something, even when the obvious is staring them in the face and this is harder on the Fire Nature than anyone else. Stubbornly refusing to give in may stand in the way of their moving on, and this applies both in the physical and cerebral sense of developing, and learning. It is easy to see how Fire Natures can become drained, 'burnt out' – and it is important that they try to keep an awareness of this possibility.

Fire Natures are people of extremes and traditional Tibetan thought would counsel the teachings of the 'Middle Way' - that of moderation - where no extreme is seen as desirable and equilibrium, or balance, is sought at all times. Extreme emotion, even with something positive like joy – Tibetans feel to be potentially damaging and not ideal because there is always the natural tendency of something to move to its polar opposite - a gentle containment of joy would be advised. Fire Natures are advised to remember to try to remain in sight of this state of being, and bring him or herself back to stability and calm whenever they can.

There can be seen to exist both a 'healthy' and 'unhealthy' aspect of the emotional condition of the three Humoural types:

Healthy Fire Optimism, dynamism, organization, creativity, determination to fulfil goals, leadership qualities, strength of purpose, intelligence, good humour, committment

Unhealthy Fire Excessive pride, over-controlling, judgemental, bombastic, mood swings, disappointment, anger, frustration, stubbornness, vengeance, violence.

General Health for The Fire Nature



Problem areas for Fire Natures

Fire Humoural disorders are said to arise due to over-indulgence in foods and lifestyle which are SHARP and HOT. Alleviated by adopting a COOLING diet and lifestyle. (trad.)

Fire is located in the Middle of the Body and it's Heat affects the Liver, the Gall-Bladder and the Small Intestine. Also, by secondary means, the Head and the Heart.

Due to their good digestive heat, Fire Natures maintain a strong and robust constitution. Fire's characteristic though, is Mind, and in this respect there is an affinity with the Air Nature, in the sense that there may be too much over- thinking and over-engagement of Mind. The quality of 'Lightness' inherent in the Fire constitution also has a link with the Air Humour, and it is important that care is taken to 'ground' or 'earth' the Fire body and mind, in the same way as Air Natures. This applies to taking regular, nourishing meals, and time out in a calming environment.

Since the physical Heart belongs to the Fire system, the partnership of both Mind and Heart, combined with the Fire Humoural Nature's Heat, tends to disturb the equilibrium of the Light Fire system, and subject it to wear and tear. In this respect, unlike the other two Humoural Natures, Fire must guard against over-heating of their body systems – too much heat and strong, stinging headaches and stomach upsets result, and in the worst cases, hypertension. In this respect, as Fire Natures engage in the relentless pursuit of a goal until it is seen to be conquered, the Heart is under strain. At this point, the Air Humour 'arises' (becomes stronger) in the system and there is a very real danger for Fire Natures to suffer strokes or stomach ulcers by middle-age. Fire Natures have great stamina but they should be aware, although they will not want to admit it, that their strength does have its limits. Because the Fire and Air people are closer in nature than Phelgm individuals, they will find they do need time to wind down and relax, and in the case of Fire, to 'cool off' quite literally.

Due to the Oily quality of Fire Natures, they may find they experience body odour and excessive perspiration. In addition, they are likely to be prone to spots, as sharp red rashes, on face, chest and back, especially in the teenage years.

The characteristic of the Fire Humour is Blood, a good and strong body system, but at times of disturbance there is a concept of 'too much blood' and Fire Natures may experience bad nose-bleeds. In the past Tibetan physicians would probably have prescribed blood-letting. Nowadays the ancient system of 'cupping' has become popular and serves a similar purpose. However, if Fire feels tension

and pressure building, he/she should avoid heating food/drinks and activities until they feel better.

The Head is a sensitive point for Fire – as the Liver Fire flares up it reaches the Head with nowhere else to go, and Fire Natures will often find that any kind of pressure on the top of the Head is extremely uncomfortable – in fact, should generally be avoided. In the event of headaches, no attempt should be made to alleviate the pain by any pressure of this kind.

Fire people will find they have, in relation to the other two Humoural Natures, a great 'thirst and hunger'. (trad.) This is because they have such an efficient digestive system that nutriments and liquids are processed much faster. The Fire Humour is traditionally said to be PURGING and while this could have several meanings, the most obvious is that no-one of the Fire Nature is likely to suffer constipation, and will in fact find that quite soon after consumption, foodstuffs will be eliminated from the body. Diarrhoea is more of a problem for Fire, and care should be taken when eating to consume slowly, concentrating on each mouthful, and chewing well. Fire Natures, with their 'fast and right now' approach to life are prone to indigestion.

There is also a danger due to the inherent heat of the Fire system, that such heat becomes overheated, and can lead to some unpleasant effects - the Fire body system can become 'toxic' in that the materials of the body are adversely affected giving rise to such complaints as heartburn, stomach ulcers, gastric problems. Also, should physical phlegm be present in the system, the Fire heat can solidify such matter, leading to cysts and tumours. Therefore it is of great importance to those of the Fire Nature, that cooling the system be kept in mind at all times.

Fire Natures must be strongly aware of their capacity to experience stress with a view to their propensity to high blood pressure. They have such a forceful 'get up and go' attitude to life, that it is easy for them to just keep on going until, when suddenly stopping, they realize they feel terrible, 'wound-up' and irritable. Fire Natures should try to be aware of their body as they rush through their day, and

Strength is of course very positive when combined with a good balance, both mentally and physically, but not a force for good when the elements of the body are out of balance. In this way the Body's Fluids, when combined with the Heat of Fire, can become, in certain circumstances, solidified and this is when lumps such as gall stones, cysts and tumours occur in the body.

It is important for all three Humoural Natures to keep the blood circulation moving efficiently around the body, the flow of Air, (chi or prana) moving, so that no Stagnation occurs, bringing with it disorders of both mind and body.

In later life, or by middle age, the possibility of high blood pressure may have arisen, and in this case, the Fire individual will be cautioned to take measures in the management of stress, diet, and lifestyle choices. If he or she had already begun to implement such advice, these disorders may never happen.

Traditionally, Fire people are said to be able to expect to experience an average length of life. The affinity between the Air and Fire Humoural Natures, which involves over-exciting or heating of the mind creates tension and places strain on the body's system. But observance of advice for the Fire individuals helps to alleviate this prognosis.

Stress management is the lesson for life for Fire Natures.

Ailments that develop QUICKLY and with INTENSITY are Fire Humoural disorders.

Personal Poison for Fire Natures

Each of the Three Natures is said to be affected by its own poison

Anger, Aversion (Judgement), Pride (trad.)

Fire Natures need to remember and be mindful of the fact that these are very strong emotions and there is tendency to be overwhelmed or 'swept away' on the red tide of their feelings. There is a sense of being the only one in the right, or the only one who knows and understands. The 'fierce spirit' of Fire can express itself in too much pride – Fire people tend to hang on to a grudge and do not 'give in' easily and this is obviously something that creates problems amongst family, friends and workmates. Jealousy and Anger are probably the most powerful human emotions and Fire Natures must try to be aware of such feelings as they begin, and before they surface, take the right action to dissolve, or try to let go. Not least for Fire Natures themselves, for high blood pressure, migraines and stress inevitably follow. Fire Natures are well-advised to try to develop patience, and tolerance of other people's views and feelings, and attempt to work with and keep in check their impulse to anger and jealousy.

Personal Positive For Fire Natures

Sharp Intelligence, Courage, Strength

Fire people have all the qualities of their animal symbols. They make great leaders, have courage and fortitude and are quick-thinking and always alert. Their 'fierce spirit' expresses itself in tirelessness and fortitude, and when they commit to something, they will see it through to the end. Along with this goes a highly competitive nature, and they will seldom rest until they come out on top. And they will never give up on something they really want. The strong digestive heat of Fire means strength and stamina and a robust constitution.

Diet for The Fire Nature



The Post-digestive Taste (internal body condition) for Fire is Sour

The Sour Taste is Warming reflecting the Fire Humoural Nature

Whilst a strong digestive heat is very positive, over-heating must be avoided, leading as it does to many disorders and is a strong irritant to the Mind.

The Sour, Salty and Hot characteristics of Fire Natures nature are pacified by Sweet, Bitter and Astringent food Tastes. And Cool, Heavy and Softening Qualities of food.

Food Tastes: Sweet, Bitter and Astringent pacify the Sour, Salty and Hot characteristics of Fire

Food Qualities: Cool, Heavy, Softening – Heavy, Soft and Cool foods pacify the Light and Hard Fire Qualities

Secondary Qualities: Thick and Blunt address Thin and Sharp Qualities

The Object of the Fire Nature diet is to SOFTEN and COOL the HARD and HOT Fire constitution.

And a secondary issue is to BLUNT the Sharpness and to THICKEN the Thin Fire quality.

In common with the Air Humour, Fire Nature individuals should make sure not to miss a meal. Regular meals are essential to keep the balance of the Light Fire Nature – in addition, with their active lifestyles and concentrated Mind, they really need to 'earth' or 'ground' their bodies and minds with nourishing food at regular intervals.

Food Tastes to Pacify The Fire Nature

Sweet, Bitter, Astringent

Sweet – the Sweet Taste is Warming (see Note below) but also Heavy

The naturally Sweet properties of grapes, raisin and date is used in both traditional Tibetan and Chinese medicine to alleviate problems arising from unbalanced Fire and Air Humours. Sugar, in its purest state, unrefined brown sugar (molasses) was also indicated traditionally. Cane sugar can be used instead. Raw vegetables are Sweet, and also very Cold and Rough, so suitable for Fire Natures, although not to excess, where the Rough quality would cause heartburn or indigestion. In addition, wheat products, bread and cake are Sweet, and also Cool, post-digestively. Although Fire individuals tend to have a fast metabolism and need not worry too much about weight gain, the counterbalancing effect of wheat products is not indicated in the same way as for Air Natures (where the quality of Heaviness has a strong role) and the nutrition aspect is obviously lacking. Pasta, couscous, and polenta. All kinds of beans, baked beans included, lentils, Indian dhal. Vegetables: carrots and butternut squash, sweet potatoes. Onions are garlic have a quality of Sweetness, but are also Heating, so care should be taken by Fire Natures not to indulge excessively. Mushrooms and aubergine are Sweet and Smooth. Beetroot is excellent, having all the properties of Smooth, Sweet and Cool. Red meat in general is Sweet.

Note: Sugar in its natural state has the characteristic of initial Warmth, but in post-digestive taste it is Cool and Heavy. Both Coolness and Heaviness are qualities indicated for Fire Natures, but it should be remembered that an excess may lead to water retention.

Bitter – the Bitter Taste is Cooling

Tea and coffee. Coffee, although Bitter and Cooling, also has a strong quality of Roughness, and can be too stimulating for Fire Natures. Too much coffee will increase the tendency for Fire individuals to speed up even more, resulting in jumpiness and headaches. Radishes are particularly Bitter and Cool. Radicchio lettuce and rye bread are both Bitter, as is rhubarb. Broccoli and grapefruit. Melon, all gourds, fenugreek, barley, basil and all dark green leafy 'greens'. Rye products are Bitter.

Astringent – the Astringent Taste is Cooling

Cranberries, raspberries, green apples, pears, alfalfa sprouts. Legumes – beans, lentils, peanuts (which do not belong to the rest of the nut family). Vinegar and foods pickled in vinegar. Lemons.

Food Qualities to Pacify The Fire Nature

Cool, Heavy, Softening

Cool

Oats are both Cool and Heavy. Oat porridge with raisins and honey make an excellent breakfast for Fire Natures and should be adopted. Asparagus is particularly Cool, also Heavy Moist and Softening, as is avocado, therefore excellent for Fire. Cold fruit juices (but not iced), fruits such as apples, pears, strawberries, raspberries, lemons and pineapple and vegetables such as cucumber, celery. Sugar is inherently cool.

Fire Natures are the only Humoural Nature really suited to the consumption of raw vegetables, or salads. The very Cold qualities of raw vegetables and salad greens address the Fire Humoural Heat. However, raw tomatoes should be approached with caution since they are not only very Cold, but also have qualities of Thinness, Sharpness and Roughness – all aggravating to the Fire Humoural Nature. Only in moderation. Similarly, radishes are very Cool to Cold, but it's qualities of Thin, Sharp and Rough should be remembered by Fire Natures.

Heavy

Sugar, as well as being Sweet, is Heavy (with post-digestive Coolness) and is quickly effective as an antidote to stress. Potatoes and all root vegetables. Wheat - all flour products are Heavy (wheat is Heavy, Sweet and Cool). Onions and garlic, with ginger are Warm and Heavy when lightly cooked in oil. Full-fat cheese – all cooked cheese is Heavy but also extremely OILY and should be avoided by Fire Natures. Pizza especially, lasagne etc. will result in a bad case of indigestion. Red meat, especially lamb, is Heavy. Pulses and beans are Heavy and Warm when used in stews and casseroles. Ripened fruits: kumquats, figs, peaches, banana, mangoes, dried fruits.

Softening

Spinach, watercress, asparagus, watercress. All 'water environment' type produce.

Secondary Food Qualities to Pacify The Fire Nature

Thick and Blunt

Foods such as figs and dates – dense and heavy, red meats (take care with cholesterol), pumpkin and butternut squash, potatoes and sweet potatoes, swedes and turnips. Egg dishes – but watch for cholesterol.



Foods which Aggravate The Fire Nature

Sour, Salty and Pungent/Hot and Oily

Sour

All the sour fruits: chief among these is Pomegranate – the Warming qualities of which are especially prized by Tibetans when treating the Cool/Cold Humoural imbalances of Earth and Air Natures are highly aggravating for the Fire constitution. In addition, pomegranates have a strong characteristic of Lightness, not suitable for the already Light Fire Humoural Nature. Gooseberries, grapefruit, green grapes, prunes, rhubarb, cherries, cranberries, peaches, pineapple, grapefruit, limes, lemon and oranges, rose hips. Brussels sprouts. Yoghourt, buttermilk, most cheeses, cumin-flavoured dishes, beer. Vinegar, pickles, miso soup. Caraway spice.

Salty

Salty fish, anchovies, sardines, pilchards, soy sauce, miso, pickles, olives, salty meat products such as bacon and ham. Crisps are both Salty and Oily – to be strongly avoided by Fire!

Salt itself should be avoided wherever possible by Fire Natures – the juice of a lemon squeezed on food can be a good substitute for salt.

Hot

Spicy foods, garlic and onion, all nuts and seeds are Heating and Oily and not suitable for Fire. Sesame and mustard oils are Heating as is Black pepper. Eggs are warming and should be used in moderation. Avoid all obvious Hot spicy foods such as Indian and Thai curries, Hot Mexican dishes, chilli based dishes. Hot sauces such as jalapeno, wasabi and horseradish.

Oily

Heavy, greasy foods and, above all, cooked cheese, such as in the Italian dishes pizza or lasagne, should be avoided at all costs as too much oil can overwhelm Fire, and when combined with the Heaviness of cheese, will undoubtedly lead to a bad case of indigestion or heartburn at the very least. All oils promote digestive heat, so Fire Natures should be careful to use the Cooler oils such as vegetable and sunflower oils, but ideally, Fire is better served using the grilling method of preparing food, or baking, and not frying. In addition, Fire, as one of the two Humours prone to over-oiliness, should avoid the consumption of full-fat cow's milk on a regular basis. Low-fat, or soy or rice milk is better. Cream and butter are best avoided by Fire, replace with yoghurt or a butter substitute spread.

Peanut butter is both Oily and Heating. Fire Natures should be wary of nuts in general, although usually recommended as a diet staple, they are in fact Heavy and Oily and will aggravate the Fire Humour if consumed in anything but small quantities.

Thin and Sharp

Vegetables such as radish and capsicum (green and red peppers) fruits such as persimmon and nectarine. Some melons and gourds such as squash and pumpkin. 'Chinese' pears and the Thai fruits such as star anise, dragon fruit etc. Too much tropical fruit generally is not advisable for Fire Natures, due to the acid nature of most Fire constitutions. Cider and cider vinegar.

Most processed foods contain too much salt and fat and whilst being unsuitable for all three Humoural Natures, Fire is most badly affected by these substances (indigestion) and should avoid

ready-cooked meals wherever possible.

Due to the Fire Nature's propensity to high blood pressure, cholesterol-forming foods should be limited. Eggs in moderation only.

Counteract acidity

Fire people are subject to acidity. (The Air Humoural Nature is also affected, but to a lesser degree than Fire). Highest on the list is alcohol, known to increase acidity. And raw tomatoes are possibly the worst. Avoid too much fresh fruit, especially of the tropical variety. In fact, it has been suggested that all citrus fruit is inherently Heating, something of which Fire Natures should take note. Care should be taken with red meat, beef especially is high in acidity, but since it is also Cool in nature, a balance can be struck for Fire Natures. Most importantly, fresh vegetables are alkaline which counteracts acidity, and Fire, as with Air Natures, should be sure to include plenty of fresh green vegetables in the diet.



Beverages for The Fire Nature

Non-Alcoholic drinks

Milk, and milky drinks generally are rightly popular with Fire – inherently Cool and Smooth.

Smoothies – obviously a good choice for Fire, counteracting Thin and Sharp – banana and honey particularly. Milkshakes are usually great favourites with Fire inidividuals – so Smooth, Cool and Softening. Malty 'bed-time' type drinks. Importantly, low-fat milk (or soy, or rice 'milk') is best for Fire, the full-fat variety is really only well tolerated by Air Natures, cows milk being both Heavy and Oily.

Cordials - Elderflower and Rose hip are Smooth and Rose hip has the added benefit of plenty of vitamin C. Fire Natures should be aware that too much fruit juice increases acidity.

Strong tea and coffee, other than in moderation, are not recommended for the Fire Nature, or any other drinks high in caffeine. Herbal teas such as peppermint and chamomile are recommended, and soothing mixes such as those containing liquorice root. Black Chinese teas are Smooth as is Jasmine tea and the mellow quality of Green tea is restorative. Black tea is Smoother than the strong Orange teas, and Darjeeling tea – very Thin and Sharp, is not suitable for Fire. Dandelion tea is particularly good as dandelion is used in Chinese medicine for the joint purposes of clearing Heat and detoxification.

Fire Natures should make sure they drink plenty of water throughout the day to Cool their inherent body Heat. If not possible to boil water and drink luke-warm, make sure it is not iced. Spring water, soft drinks such as lemonade.

Alcoholic Drinks

Campari is both Bitter and Cooling, as are all aniseed based drinks. Red wine is said to be good for high blood pressure. White wine is more acidic than Red, and the already acidic constitution of a Fire individual will be aggravated by consumption of white wines. Alcohol such as the aged spirits: whisky, brandy, sherry, port etc are too Warming for Fire Natures, clear liquors such as vodka or tequila are better, but, bearing in mind the Fire Humoural low tolerance for alcohol, all alcoholic drinks should be approached sensibly and red wine might be better than spirits, or alternatively, beer which is Smooth and soothing. But not lager, which is Thin and Sharp and will irritate the Fire Nature.

A warning: Fire people should be aware of the dangers posed to them by alcohol. The Fire Humour has a Fast, Light and Hot constitution which does not allow drinking alcohol to excess. Fire Natures will find themselves very quickly influenced (in direct opposition to the Earth Nature, which can absorb quite heavy quantities of alcohol relatively unaffected) by their consumption of alcohol and will find that it causes more disruption both physically and mentally than to either Air or Phelgm Humoural Natures.

Moderation and awareness are a necessity for the Fire Natures in his or her relationship with alcohol.

In addition, 'energy' drinks should be avoided by Fire. The danger of strong headaches and dizziness is very high, and there is even a danger of heart problems.

Conclusions for The Fire Nature

To Cool - the Hot Fire constitution

Fire Natures need to be aware of the inherent Heat they carry in their bodies, and take steps to alleviate it's 'ascending' energy, which can have consequences for the Mind – moods, irritation and more seriously, disturbances which can lead to mental imbalance and in later life, strokes. Strong headaches are a problem. Too much of the wrong kinds of food and drinks, consumed in a state of rush and stress should be avoided by Fire at all costs - the result will be heartburn. Sweet Taste is Heavy and Cooling and can be found in natural, unprocessed sugar and sugar products, oats, wheat and flour products, as well as in sweet fruits. Bitter Taste is also Cooling.

To Make Heavier and Softer - the Thin and Sharp Fire Qualities

Fire Natures should avoid food and drinks with the Thin and Sharp qualities and bring the 'flaring up' Fire energy down with Heavy and Soft natured foods and drinks in their regular diet.

Salt should also be avoided by Fire. Use lemon juice instead.

To Dry - the Moist and Hot Fire system

A 'dry' type of cooking, such as grilling, baking, or roasting. No frying. All oils are said to 'overwhelm' the Oily Fire Nature, resulting in indigestion and heartburn. No fried or oily dishes, especially cooked cheese, as in pizzas or lasagne.

Cuisine Suggestions for Fire Natures

In common with Air Natures, a typical British cuisine/diet is suitable for Fire. Heavy, to balance Fire's Lightness, relatively non-Oily (but no fried foods or chips), fairly Dry for Fire's Moistness and essentially quite Cool in nature. Not heavily spiced or seasoned (Heating).

Japanese food is also Cool, but also too Light for Fire, and too Salty

An Italian cuisine is fresh and healthy, also not too spiced or seasoned, but beware dishes such as pizza or lasagne – all that Oily cooked cheese! The national dishes of Scandinavia and Germany also complement the Fire Nature – relatively Heavy and Dry, non-Oily and Cool-natured – but watch for too much salt.

Behaviour for The Fire Nature

Learning to pace oneself, rest in cool places, calming music, neutral environments near water (trad.)

Fire people should take care not to exert themselves, work out or engage in strenuous exercise in the sun – or an overheated indoor environment. Competitive sports provide a good outlet for the Fire Nature's competitive spirit, but care must be taken to remember it is a game, and take a more relaxed attitude to the outcome! Driving on a regular basis in crowded cities is likely to be very stressful for Fire – they always want to be up in front - so some kind of soothing music or mental exercise could be adopted to overcome mounting tension. Fire people should always remember to include periods of quiet or reflection, whenever possible.

Fire Natures should avoid overheating generally. It is not advisable for any of the Humoural types to eat whilst in direct sunshine, but for Fire it is particularly important to remember this. The famous Fire headache will be the direct result.

Fire people must try to avoid confrontational situations. Find an approach which facilitates calmness in stressful situations and curb the Fire tendency to jump to conclusions, make judgements. Avoid dwelling mentally on states which emphasise the Fire Nature's proclivity for aggression, hatred, pride, or a negative state of mind.

Tibetan medicine particularly strongly advises Fire individuals NOT to take naps during the day. (This is allowed, even recommended for Air Natures, but the Fire constitution is aggravated and unsettled by daytime sleep. Earth Natures may nap, but make sure that it is a short one)

Lifestyle/Activities for The Fire Nature

Fire Natures should seek stress-relieving activities near or on water or cool mountains (trad.)

Anything watery for the Fire Nature. Any water activity - swimming in the sea, rivers or lakes – sailing, surfing, water-skiing, paddle-skiing, kayaking. Just walking or resting beside water will calm and restore hot-blooded mental activity.

Skiing and snow-boarding are ideal activities for energetic Fire people. Walking in the cool mountain air is relaxing. Regular exercise can be strenuous for short periods only, prolonged strenuous activity exacerbates (and overheats) the fast Fire body system. Exercise is a necessary part of a Fire Nature's lifestyle as it helps to reduce stress levels, and promotes better sleep patterns, important for the driven Fire individual, who finds it hard to shut down.

Fire people are action people and need an active lifestyle to channel aggression and ambition - but must always be aware of the need for rest to restore their relentless mental activity.

Careers for The Fire Nature

Anything requiring competitive, driving energy and enthusiasm. Plenty of challenges and sociability.

Marketing, advertising, IT, sales, events organizer, television, entrepreneur, athlete, scientist, technician, inventor, foreign correspondent, diplomat, administrator, politician, president, prime minister, company C.E.O.

Best Environment for The Fire Nature

Cool, breezy places, near water (trad).

Oceanside, lakeside, island living, the spaciousness of hills and mountains. Cool heated mental activity with mountain views and deep, cold stretches of water. Walk in deep forests, rest on grassy hillsides, under shady trees beside a sparkling stream.

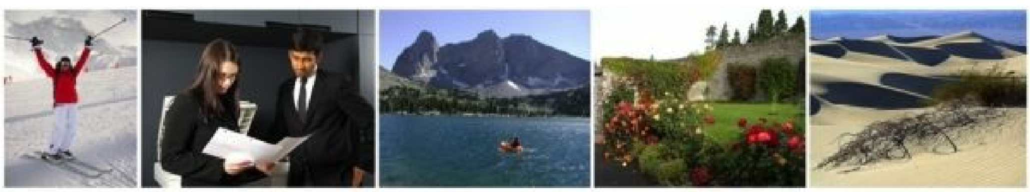
Good places for Fire Natures

The British Isles, North America and Canada. The Netherlands, New Zealand, the Scandinavian countries: Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Finland. Switzerland and Austria. The European countries: France, Italy, Germany.

Problem places for Fire Natures

Hot, harsh climates such as those of: Egypt, Dubai or the Middle East, desert areas such as those in Northern Africa or India. Pakistan. Morocco and Tunisia. Heavily populated areas generally – too much energy generated heightens the already busy mental activity of Fire Natures.

Tibetans also traditionally advise against living in countries which are overcrowded and dirty, and where people are quarrelsome. This is especially important for Air Natures to bear in mind – their Light, enhanced senses are likely to be overwhelmed by such negative energies, but Fire Natures will also find themselves unsettled and restless with a danger of heightened blood pressure in such surroundings.



Treatments/Therapies for The Fire Nature



Water treatments in cool pools, mountain spa retreats, yoga holidays in a temperate environment. Gentle Asian massage and treatments using cool scents such as lemongrass and lime. Facial massage, for both men and women is deeply relaxing as well as physically beneficial. Reflexology is extremely effective for the release of tension through the feet. Colonic irrigation is also highly suitable for Fire Natures, since the traditional Tibetan treatment for this Humoural type is 'purging'. Fire is also the Humour most likely to benefit from a detox. The constant presence of heat in the body means the possibility of a fundamental fermentation process is always present.

No saunas for Fire people – blood pressure is easily stimulated, and saunas are too hot and dry for Fire. Steam baths are better – the Watery aspect, but should be carefully monitored to make sure heat remains constant and moderate. If possible seek out the traditional Japanese bathing experience, where the bathing process is ritualistic, slow and scented. The Tibetan treatment for Fire is the use of the 'waterbed stone'. Rivers in Tibet are deep and very cold, and the stone from the riverbed can be utilized in several ways. As a treatment, a stone is lifted from the bottom of the river and keeping it cold and away from light, it is placed at various points on the patient's body, where it is massaged. This is the opposite of the more well-known 'hot stone' treatment; it works in the same way, but where the intention is to decrease heat in the body, rather than, as for Earth and Air Natures, a cold system needing to be made warmer.

Interiors for The Fire Nature

Expensive, expansive and neutral



Fire people need interiors which are cool, calm and spacious. ‘Classic contemporary’ best describes the look of a Fire Nature interior. Ideally suited to fast-moving, busy Fire types, neutral tones, smooth materials and luxurious finishes in a spare, uncluttered environment with lots of light. A monochromatic palette of all the ‘stone’ tones, sand, beige, grey, pale tea. Interesting textures, modular well-upholstered furniture with spare, clean lines, horizontal planes.

The latest trends play a large part in the lives of Fire people, and this is reflected in their homes. Perspex staircases, stone freestanding baths, unconventional layouts and materials. The neat, satisfying efficiency of the marriage of function and form. Nothing fussy, nothing extraneous. Fire hates clutter. The cool, horizontal lines of a traditional monochrome Japanese interior, teamed with neutral beige suede modular sofa units, a polished black granite floor, architectural pieces, black leather and chrome. Discreet low-lighting from concealed sources. An Eastern-style decorative feature such as an oversized glass vase with something green and sculptural.

Spacious, airy modern kitchens in stainless steel and granite and expensively simple kitchen equipment reflect the Fire Nature desire for show-stopping features which are also ergonomic and efficient. The Italian designers have exactly the right thing.

Against this neutral and unobtrusive backdrop Fire individuals will enjoy displaying the expensive toys of the modern age - the ‘tech-y’ Fire soul - a wall-mounted plasma-screen tv, a large, state-of-the-art sound system … .. Fire may choose to have the latest racing model rowing machine in the corner, but should be dissuaded – his or her rooms must provide a real respite from the demands of the outside world from which he/she finds it hard to dis-engage. The gym is the place for this kind of equipment.

The element of self-promotion in the Fire Nature’s make-up would enjoy seeing large photographs of themselves, doing something adventurous like snowboarding in South America, or sailing through a gale off America’s East Coast -in plain frames, grouped around the room.

Windows can be large and wrap around walls, and light, metallic blinds can be used. Fire Natures do not have a problem with security or privacy, do not need to shut out the night and enjoy seeing all-round views and an expanse of sky. Lighting should be low, and restful – dimmer switches and even softly coloured lighting effects.

Overall, a cool and current affluence matches the needs of Fire Natures in his/her home interior and in the objects chosen to reflect the image of him/herself as he/she wishes to present to the world.

Room Scenting for The Fire Nature

Cooling, calming, relaxing



White sandalwood, Camphor. The Cool scents of lavender (contains camphor), lily, 'white flowers' etc. Peppermint, pine, the 'ozone' fragrances.   Lime, lemon, lemongrass, eucalyptus, grapefruit, bergamot, mandarin, vetiver. The Cool, Thin fragrance of tea: the de Chine, green tea.

Scented candles floating in large bowls of water and aromatherapy make a better treatment for Fire than the burning quality of incense.

Medicinal Herbs for The Fire Nature



These European herbs (and some Asian ones) have been chosen for their close approximation to their Tibetan counterpart:

Dandelion is particularly indicated in Tibetan medicine as an antidote to Fire Nature's Heat and to clear toxins from the body. In the West, Dandelion tea can be part of a regular diet. Turmeric may be included in the diet on a regular basis due to its excellent blood-cleansing and de-toxifying properties.

Parsley and Coriander are both blood-thinning therefore excellent for Fire. Parsley also counteracts acidity in the body. Tamarind is traditionally advocated for its Cooling properties.

Yarrow can help in cases of hypertension. Aloe Vera is seen as beneficial for Fire Nature imbalances

Aconite is cooling

Hawthorn can help to lower blood pressure

Feverfew for migraine headaches (which are associated with Fire)

Marshmallow helps to eliminate acidity from the body and calm indigestion and is often used in conjunction with Slippery Elm which has a similar function

Peppermint and **Sage** are both cooling herbs

Rhodiola (Sedum) counteracts toxin-heat

Sea Buckthorn (Hippophae) inhibits inflammation

In Chinese medicine, Honeysuckle relieves Heat in the body, as does Chrysanthemum and Peony. Mastic gum, from the Pistacia Lentiscus tree on the Greek island of Chios, is made into pellets which not only reduces the pain of mouth ulcers, but helps to prevent them

Note: Ingestion of medicine should correlate to the time at which the problem humour is most

aggravated, i.e. for Phelgm – morning; for Fire Natures – noon and for Air Natures – evening.

The 'Food Spices'



The warming food spices are best avoided or used only sparely by Fire Natures. Remember however that Nutmeg is an exception being especially useful for the Heart. But use sparingly as Nutmeg in large quantities can be toxic.

In general Fire Natures should look for blood-cleansing and Liver detoxifying supplements.

3 THE AIR NATURE

The Nature of AIR is MOVEMENT



AIR is all the MOBILE ELEMENTS of the body, specifically mobility of thoughts; the subtle flow of mental energies Tibetans call the 'Wind-horse' – with the Mind as its rider. Also the energetic impulse which drives the movement of the limbs, and enables Speech

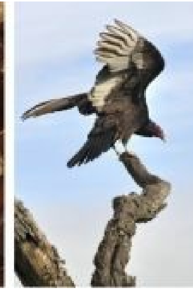
The Air Qualities are Mobile, Rough, Thin and Stiff

AIR is Light, fleeting, fast, pervading every part of the body - said by Tibetans to 'go everywhere'. AIR is Energy and Spirit - bringing clarity of thought, perception and action. Tibetans traditionally ascribe the qualities of Roughness, Thinness and Stiffness to the Air Humour.

The Air Characteristics are Light, Cold and Dry

The Air Symbol is the Vulture

According to the traditional teachings "Here, there and everywhere." The Air Humour can be both Hot (Wind fans the flame) and Cold, but is generally considered as a Cold Humour, except where fever is present.

The Air Colour is Blue

Pure energy and the spaciousness of the sky.

The Air Taste (body constitution) is Bitter which is Cool

The Location of Air in the Body

The Air Humour is located (or 'resides') in the Lower portion of the body. The hip bones, waist and pelvic region, the base of spine, and the genitals. This positioning of the Air Humour means that although being primarily governed by Air, those having this Nature are also expressive in a physical way. The Air pattern includes the Skin, the Bones and Teeth, and the hair of the Body.

Although the Lower Body is the seat of the Air Humour, it is said by Tibetans to 'go everywhere'. Traditionally they have the concept of the 'Windhorse' – Air energy which is carried here, there and everywhere on the back of a galloping horse. In the same way, the cloth banners, printed with prayers, and attached to tall poles, 'carry' the printed energy of the prayers on the wind that blows over the snow mountains of Tibet.

The Air Organs

The Heart, and the Large Intestine. The Skin and the Bones. The Air Humour governs respiration - the Breath and Speech. Traditional teaching also includes the 'Life-channel' (roughly the body's vital essence).

Air Natures tend to have on-going digestive problems, but are mostly dominated by the 'Heart' – which for Tibetans means something other than the physical organ – which belongs to the Fire Nature. In this sense it is usually seen more in terms of what we in the West might call a 'soul' or the means by which we think and feel. Air types are said to 'think too much' and this is something which should be managed throughout life.

The Air 'Flower'

The 'Flower' of the Air Organs is said to be the Ears and the hearing. Also involved in the Air pattern is the sense of Smell.

However, although the Mouth and Lips belong to the Phelgm Humour, the Tongue is said to be ruled by the Heart, and this should be seen in the traditional sense of the emotional Heart which belongs in the Air environment. The energy of the Air Humour controls Speech – a speech defect is an Air problem.

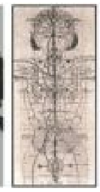
In addition, the Air Humour being the spiritual movement of the body 'winds' (also known as prana or chi), has five main energy points at which it manifests: the crown of the head, the throat, heart, navel and genitals.

To Balance The Air Nature

Tibetan medicine would seek to counterbalance the Mobile, Dry, Light, Cold, Rough, Thin and Stiff qualities therefore the intention is to Stabilise the mercurial qualities of the Air system, to Moisten where Air is Dry, make Heavy where Air is Light, to Smooth and Soften the Roughness and to make Flexible where Air is Stiff.

On a mental plane, however, most importantly for Air people is that by the very nature of their subtle perception, they should seek to protect themselves to some extent, and to ground themselves wherever possible. In whichever way is found to be most effective.







The Air Nature and the Three Ages of Man and Woman

Old Age

Tibetan thought traditionally attributes the Three Humoural Natures to Three Ages of Man/Woman

The Air Humour traditionally represents Old Age. As time goes on the qualities of the human body become Lighter, the Heavy qualities of Earth and Water, and the Hot drive of Fire lessen. The spirit becomes stronger in relation to the other two elements and therefore in old age it is necessary to follow the appropriate diet and behaviour/lifestyle activities to balance this tendency as much as possible and make comfortable and stable with nourishing food and appropriate activities.

The Air Nature and Time of Arisal

When the Air Nature is aggravated and needs special attention

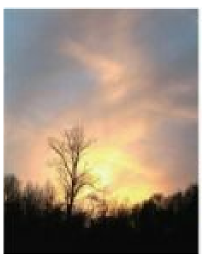
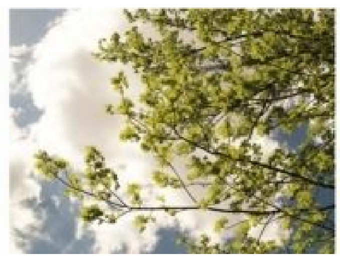
Daily: Evening and Dawn

The Air Humour is at is strongest during the Evening and at the break of Dawn. It is pacified by the Heavy, Damp and Oily qualities of Morning. Air Natures should be aware that at this time of day (evening and dawn) they will find their mental energy most disturbed and restless and feel themselves most dislocated. They should try to surround themselves with the familiar, undertake familiar comforting tasks, prepare food, settle down with family or old friends and pleasant conversation. Do something they know calms and pacifies. As early evening passes, so equilibrium will return.

Seasonal: Spring

The Air Humour 'arises' – gains most strength, is most active - in Spring (Rough and Cool conditions) and is pacified by the Heavy and Warm qualities of Summer. Air Natures feel comfortable and more grounded in warm and particularly moist climates, such as a tropical ones. It should be noted that early Autumn also has qualities of Oiliness, and Air Natures will feel comfortable and at ease at this time.

See the Diet section for Air-pacifying foods.

The Air Nature Appearance

The quality of Lightness is apparent with Air Natured people, who are usually quite tall and slim, with light-toned skin and hair which is normally thick and rather coarse in texture. Their bodies have the Air attribute of boniness – that is, unlike Earth Natures, their bones 'show through' at the ankle, wrist, knee, elbow and collarbone. Their eyes tend to be rather deep-set and they may have a lively, engaged expression, or a thoughtful, introspective one – the 'mobility' of the Air personality is easily detected in the appearance of an Air individual.

The Air speech reflects the mobile quality too – with bursts of exuberance or becoming almost inarticulate.

The Air Nature Personality



Creative spirit

Outspoken and honest, decisive, creative, spiritually attuned, all of these qualities describe the typical Air Nature. People dominated by this Humour have a tendency to survive on nervous energy, which can make them anxious, excitable, talkative, up and down emotionally. Air Natures are quick to embrace a new concept, and are quickly motivated to take on a new task, however difficult (in fact, the more difficult the better). They can be fearless and courageous and speak their mind as they see it - diplomacy is not their strong point. Air people tend to be impulsive and may offend by straight speaking, lack of consideration for other views when 'on a crusade'. Generous and often inspirational, they may be better at inspiring others to take up a task than to see it through themselves as once mastered, boredom sets in and Air is on the look-out for the next challenge.

Interesting friends, and never dull, they run the risk of burning themselves out with their own enthusiasm and the intensity of their deeply-felt views. Air should take time to consider first before rushing headlong into the 'next thing', and repenting later when they find things not as they imagined, and themselves exhausted.

The sense of injustice is very strong, and the Air individual will usually see the side of the underdog in any conflict, and have a very strong sense of what is right. They will not easily suffer false hypocrisy and prevarication. Air people are great seekers after the truth - which may well include the spiritual quest. The energy of the Air Humour is Clarity of the Senses and this usually gives an Air an advantage in the search for the answers to metaphysical questions and philosophies.

Because Air Natures are 'clear see-ers' they can be dismissive of others who do not have their ability to deal quickly with life's developments. Here the very positive [Buddhist] attribute of compassion can be called on, and Air should seek to remember the inter-connectedness of all things and the common ups and downs of life we all share.

The chief defining quality of the Air Humour is said to be MOBILITY. Tibetans illustrate this by using the symbol of the Windhorse, carrying the airs of the breath (or prana, chi) around the body. As with much that is traditional in Tibetan thought, there is more than one aspect of this concept. The Windhorse is also seen as the prayer-flag (literally 'lung-ta' - the Tibetan word 'lung' literally means 'air') – [its connection to the physical organ might be that the Lungs control breath] which, printed

with prayers, and set on a windy ridge, will catch and carry the prayers of whoever constructs it across the lands to the mountain peaks, where the gods receive them. Similarly, our thoughts are seen to be carried on the winds of our breath, and in our internal channels, all over our body, either contaminating or purifying our body's system. This is a concept which has a ready association today, with the idea of 'negative' and 'positive' thoughts and their relation to mental health.

Tibetans called Air 'the Monkey mind' and whilst the monkey has many positive qualities, such as cleverness, quickness and alertness, he also spends his life jumping around, and this can typify the Air temperament. An Air Nature should try to become grounded and still his/her mind. Meditation is an excellent way to do this, and if possible should become a regular part of the Air lifestyle. Also, as Tibetans counsel awareness of out thoughts and actions, Air people should be watchful that thoughts and feelings do not get out of hand, and if there seems to be too much activity, then steps should be taken to still the mind, and find a natural ease. If the 'monkey mind' becomes too active, in order to settle, to sort out the chaff, and to reconnect with a stillness Air can recognize, time alone is as important as busy, active, sociability.

Physically, this mobility can manifest in the speed with which Air Natures move rapidly from one new project to another - enthusing about a new project one week, but next week deciding that something else is better. Erratic, they tend to jump from one thing to another. More than once their more cautious friends may find themselves wondering what happened to last week's good idea. Air individuals do also tend to be physically active, and rarely move around slowly. In fact, 'always on the go' tends to sum up Air very accurately.

Tibetan thought traditionally ascribes another quality to Air - that of ABSORBANCY. As with the quality of Mobility, this can be seen to have meaning in both the physical and cerebral sense. Physically, the porous nature of the Air system, both internally (the body) and externally (the skin), readily absorbs the moisture it needs. But in addition, there is a cerebral aspect to the absorbency quality, and this is where the Light energy of Air is sensitive to and absorbs - sometimes to the point of becoming overwhelmed by - the Heavier energies of the other Humours. The very subtle quality (as 'light as air') of the Air Nature makes it necessary for Air individuals to find and employ a sense of self-protection, something they may have recognized, and learnt to deal with, from an early age. The ability to find a way of grounding themselves is of utmost importance

Air people, unconsciously or subconsciously, are able to put up boundaries against others and too much activity, in an effort to protect themselves. However, whilst being a natural response and necessary to maintain the balance Air Natures seek, taken too far, this tendency can lead to isolation, and loneliness. Air should be aware that, at times, it is all to easy to be alone and recognize that human contact and a place in the scheme of things brings the stability he/she, consciously or unconsciously, seeks. This tendency leads to another contradiction in the way Air Natures are perceived. Although their will is very strong, owing to their Light and Mobile energy, Air individuals are not quite as robust as they appear. Externally, they can seem hard, even harsh, dogmatic and intolerant. They may appear independent and self-reliant but in fact Air people actively need the warmth and grounding of affectionate, supportive relationships which will be gratefully absorbed, and reciprocated. Initially suspicious, finding it hard to open up, once given, an Air Nature's friendship is usually real, open-hearted and long-lasting. And it is of the utmost importance to Air that a true sense of connection exists with those who figure regularly in their lives. E.M. Forster's maxim 'Only connect' could have been conceived for the Air Nature.

There can be seen to exist both a 'healthy' and 'unhealthy' aspect of the emotional condition of the

three Humoural types:

Healthy Air clear-thinking and seeing, plain-speaking/straight-talking, seekers after truth and justice, intolerance of falsity or pretension. Courageous and self-reliant. Creative skills, enthusiasm. Bright ideas, inspiring and hardworking when interest is engaged. Loyal friends.

Unhealthy Air Impulsive, rushing headlong without forethought. Self-isolation, putting up boundaries, sadness, over-thinking and planning. Conviction that he or she is the only one who knows and is right. Neurosis and paranoia. Lack of commitment. Inability to tolerate routines.

General Health for The Air Nature



Problem areas for Air Natures

Air Humoural disorders arise when the Air Natured individual engages in excessive indulgence of a lifestyle and foods which are LIGHT and ROUGH. (trad.) Alleviated by the characteristics of HEAVY and OILY to pacify– which applies to both food and behaviour.

Air is located in the Lower part of the body, the Large Intestine, the Hips, Waist, the pelvic region and genitals, but is said to 'go everywhere' on the back of the body's energies. Tibetans call this movement 'riding the Windhorse'.

This can be translated as engaging in too much thinking, which depletes the body's energies. In addition, lack of sleep and regular meals (ROUGH behaviour) disrupts the Light and Mobile Air Humour much more than the other two (Humours) which are more 'grounded' or robust. Tibetan thought traditionally describes the Air Nature as being like 'a washed cloth hung out to dry'. In the high altitude of the Tibetan Plateau washing would dry stiff like a board, and Tibetans use this analogy to accurately describe the Thin, Stiff, and Dry nature of the Air individual.

Certain types of behaviour, foods and lifestyle choices are traditionally said to 'raise' the Air Humour - to cause the Air energy to 'rise up' and flow everywhere; particularly disturbing to the Air Nature is when these energies rise up to the Head, and affect the Mind. Traditional Tibetan teachings cite too much excitable talking as the classic example of the Air individual exhausting him or herself with this type of Light and Rough Behaviour. The tendency of Air individuals to rush about and overexert themselves, leading to exhaustion is another behaviour which can be included in this category. The Tibetan approach attempts to 'ground' or 'earth' the flighty Air energy. It should be remembered that the Air Humour can be activated in the other two Natures if indulging in this type of behaviour.

Air-type ailments tend to be of a mental nature. Light sleepers, Air Natures are 'always on the go' and can easily exhaust themselves without realizing it. Prone to more self-doubt that the other two Humoural types, and with a strong tendency to strive for perfection, Air Natures can wear themselves out with their over-analytical approach to themselves and everyone around them. Insomnia, worry, anxiety, lack of rest, stress, anorexia, M.E., respiratory disorders, headache, tension in neck and shoulders – all these are suffered when the Air Humour is out of balance. It is easy to see how mental problems are usually associated with this Humour –when the Air Nature's clarity and capacity for too much thought becomes distorted it can turn inwards on itself which creates a climate for neuroses.

Air Natures, with their propensity for looking inward, can succumb to negativity – sadness, melancholia, looking backwards at the past.

Physical ailments however tend to be those of an airborne nature: colds, 'flu and airborne allergens such as hay-fever. Air Natures have a low toleration for cold and should remember to wrap up well and keep themselves generally warm. Air affects the bones and aches and pains in the joints are not uncommonly suffered by Air people. In later life there may be problems with arthritis and rheumatism and a need for hip and knee replacements. As the teeth are involved in the Air 'zone' - poor dental health is often associated with this Humour. Since the jaw is involved here, Air Natures may feel tension and pain in this area. As the Skin is part of the Air system stressful conditions may create skin problems such as eczema, dermatitis, psoriasis.

Air people experience stress in the region of the Large Intestine (one of 'their' organs), and often have ongoing problems with bloating and indigestion. Usually the bloating occurs before eating, and seems to be settled by a meal. Indigestion happens when Air is mentally preoccupied and nervous energy interferes with the digestion.

Constipation can be an on-going problem too, due to Air's Dryness and their quality of 'holding back' generally. Since the Air Humour is located in the Lower body, Air Natures may have problems with the lower back and the hips.

Air Natures, along with Fire Natures, are prone to acidity and care should be taken to avoid too much acid-forming foods such as: alcohol, red meats, fresh fruit juices (especially tropical fruits such as pineapple) and dried fruits. Of the nuts, cashews and pistachios are acidic. Stomach ulcers can result from a period of prolonged stress to the body, combined with acidity.

It is interesting to note that in the Tibetan tradition, lack of digestive heat is thought to be at the root of all disease. If Air is essentially a Cool Humour, then we can see the importance of keeping the body's system heated by consuming the right foods and creating the right environment for regular exercise to speed the circulation and prevent stagnation and blockage.

Air Natures are traditionally said to be able to expect a fairly short life – reason enough to begin to try to stop the relentless procession of thoughts and over-emphasis on oneself to which Air Natures are prone. Turning outwards to others and trying to embrace the concept of the inter-relatedness of all things, the 'not separate' nature of all mankind, helps to see things in perspective and put one's problems in perspective. In this way it is possible to see the 'bigger picture', to become more accepting of oneself and minimise stress.

A calmer and more reflective approach to life is advised for Air Natures. Find a Quiet Mind.

AILMENTS that develop SUDDENLY and MOVE from one area to another are Air Humoural disorders.

Personal Poison for Air Natures

Each of the Three Natures is said to be affected by its own poison

Attachment, Envy, Desire

Air is Envy and Attachment – to things which must inevitably change – which brings its own suffering. And Desire for things to be as they wish them to be, not as they are. This attachment is usually, in the case of Air Natures, of the sentimental variety, Air Natures are not generally materialistic as a whole. The need is to try to be aware of one's attachment to people, places and

experiences, and to try to keep such attachment in proportion, try to 'touch lightly' and maintain awareness of the eternally changing nature of phenomena.

Where Envy is concerned – of other peoples' lifestyle, career, relationships etc. – we should try to remember that our lives, Tibetans believe, follow on from the one before, in that this one is exactly tailored for us, and no-one else, just as the next will be. This doesn't mean that there is nothing we can do, that everything is pre-determined, for within the framework there is a great deal an individual can and will do to affect both this life and the next. Just a realization that this is 'our' life and someone else's is 'their' life is helpful to keep in mind.

Air Natures need to balance internally – to become calm, to find comfort, and to establish stability and equilibrium.

Personal Positive for Air Natures

Imagination, Integrity, Crusading, Spiritual

Air Natures have an inspirational effect on those around them. Their strong imaginations weave flights of fantasy and soar to heights where others can only watch and wonder. They are the 'clear-see-ers' in life and are able to delve deep into those situations which seem unfathomable to everyone else. Whole worlds are available to the Air Nature to do with as he/she wishes.

Their crusading spirit allows for no hypocrisy and they are fearless in defence of others less courageous than themselves. Air Natures are constant in their strong approach to life's challenges which they tackle in their own, often idiosyncratic way. They have a high degree of self-reliance, and have no need to seek the approbation of others for judgements they make.

[It could be that the Tibetan choice of the Vulture as a symbol for the Air Humour is connected to the practice of harnessing the power of the Vulture to the final stages in the death and disposal of the human body. The practice of 'sky burial' where the body is prepared, in a high place, and by specially appointed practitioners, is left to the Vultures. The spiritual aspect of the Air Humour is perhaps invoked in these last stages, where the last of an individual's 'last rites' are conducted and finally disposed of, by the Vulture.]

Diet for The Air Nature



The Post-digestive Taste (internal body condition) for Air is Bitter

The Bitter Taste is Cooling, reflecting the Cool and Light qualities of the Air Humour

The Rough, Light and Cool characteristics of the Air Nature are pacified (alleviated) by Sweet, Sour and Salty food Tastes. And Heavy, Oily, Smooth and Pungent (hot, spicy) qualities of foods stabilise the Airy system. Secondary qualities of pacifying foods for Air are: Warmth and Pliability.

Food Tastes: Sweet, Sour and Salty pacify the Light and Cold Air Nature characteristics

Food Qualities: Heavy, Oily, Smooth, Pungent and Moist pacify the Thin, Dry, Rough, Light and Hard characteristics of Air. The Secondary qualities of Warmth comforts the Cool Air Nature and Pliability addresses the body's Stiffness

Secondary Qualities: Warmth, Pliability/Flexibility

The Object of the Air diet is to HEAT and invigorate the digestive system, make HEAVY the LIGHT Air Nature and to MOISTEN Air's DRYNESS - regularly. Regularity is most important for Air Natures who cannot tolerate missing meals and should never undertake a fast. A Warming and Nutritious diet for Air individuals.

It should always be remembered that Air is the one Humour which is variable – its very nature is Mobility. This means that an Air disorder in the body can be either Cold or Hot. Therefore it is important for Air Natures to avoid EXTREMES in diet – very cold iced drinks, or the burning heat of foods such as Asian curries. Dishes containing chillies for example, will equally cause the Air Humour to flare up and disrupt the body.

Food Tastes to Pacify The Air Nature

Sweet, Sour and Salty

Sweet – the Sweet Taste is Warming and Heavy

Wheat products, bread and cake. Flour products are 'comfort' foods, being Heavy in nature, counteracting the Air energy which arises in any Humour during times of stress of either a physical or mental nature. Air people will crave a sweet cake or pastry when feeling ungrounded or restless, or in any way weakened, whether mentally or from hunger. Pies of all kinds are attractive: chicken pie, steak pie, apple pie – Heavy and comforting. Pancakes and maple syrup! Doughnuts, croissants, cinnamon buns. While the slim, active Air body usually has a fast metabolism, resorting to this type of food too often of course brings some weight gain, but in addition, it is important for Air to remember that wheat products are inherently Cool – not helpful in the long term.

Honey should have a special place in the Air Nature diet. Tibetan advice usually cites 'Cane sugar' or 'Molasses' – Honey is Lighter than these two, but has valuable nutritional properties (including Warmth) in abundance. In place of the traditional recommendations, old-fashioned Malt syrup could be substituted.

Milk and dairy products are Sweet in nature. Barley is particularly Warming. Rice, especially brown. The naturally Sweet properties of raisin and date are used in traditional Chinese medicine to alleviate Air and Fire problems. Grapes fall into this category. Sweet fruits such as peaches, melons, sweet plums and nectarines. Sweet vegetables such as carrots and butternut squash, pumpkin, parsnips, turnips and sweet potatoes. Beetroot is Sweet, as is lettuce. Mushrooms and aubergine are Sweet and Smooth. But potatoes and cabbage are Cool in nature, as well as being Sweet, so care should be taken not to use too much, unless, and only for Air Natures, and then in moderation, the potatoes are fried as chips. Hummus, as a chickpea product is Oily, Smooth and Sweet. Ideal for Air. Also tofu – Sweet, Heavy and Oily. And chocolate! While the other two Humours, particularly Earth Natures, may have to decline the dessert option, Air Natures are able to accept; in fact 'nursery food' is excellent for Air – Heavy, Warming, Sweet and comforting.

Red meat in general is Sweet. However, beef and pork are considered Cool, whilst lamb is Warm in nature.

Sugar in its natural state has the characteristic of initial Warmth, but in post-digestive taste it is Cool. Therefore care should be taken by Air individuals to balance a desire for sweetness with awareness that once in the body system, sugar will become both Heavy (good) and Cool (not good). Heaviness is a quality indicated for the Air Humour, but the tendency to Coolness is not. Brown sugar and molasses are recommended by Tibetan medicine as more inherently Warming, as is honey, and refined white sugar products should be discarded in favour of these.

Sour – the Sour Taste is Heating

Gooseberries, grapefruit, green grapes, prunes, rhubarb, cherries, cranberries, peaches, pomegranate, pineapple, grapefruit, limes, oranges, rose hips. Brussels sprouts. Yoghourt, buttermilk, most cheeses, the Sweet and Sour dishes of the Chinese cuisine, such as miso soup. Cumin-flavoured dishes, beer. Cooked tomatoes in tomato-based dishes, e.g. the sauces of Italian food.

Air people must be careful with acidic fruits such as pineapple and grapefruit. Too much acidity will outweigh the pacifying sour taste.

Salty - the Salty Taste is Warming – with the added attribute of Heaviness

Salt increases digestive heat and since Air is deficient in this area, a small amount of salt (sea salt is recommended rather than the processed 'table' variety) in the diet will help to Warm the Cool Air constitution. Produce from the sea, fish, especially smoked fish such as kippers and mackerel. Salmon and mackerel have the added advantage of also being Oily. Sardines. Anchovies. Tuna. Bacon – in fact the traditional English breakfast of fried eggs and bacon is an excellent meal for Air. Ham and sausages. Olives. Marmite, Vegemite. Seaweed and kelp. Miso soup is good and soy sauce – Oily, Salty and Heavy. Salty snacks such as potato crisps in moderation can be tolerated by Air Natures - Salty, Oily, Heavy.

In common with Earth, Air should not follow the current dietary advice to cut salt out of the diet completely. As with current thinking though, care should be taken to ensure that not too much salt is being consumed in a regular diet. Whilst its Heating properties are indicated in the case of Air's Cool nature, too much salt can lead to water retention and high blood pressure. As with all things moderation is always the key.



Food Qualities to Pacify The Air Nature

Heavy, Oily, Smooth, Pungent and Moist

Heavy

Sugar, as well as being Sweet, is Heavy and as Tibetans say, gives 'instant gratification' when sought as an antidote to stress. But as it is Cool in post-digestive taste, care must be taken to counteract this. Pasta, Couscous, potatoes – Air Natures are best nourished by sautéed or mashed potatoes and can prepare them with butter plus full cream milk. Onions and garlic, especially cooked with ginger, are an excellent Air food, Warming and Heavy when lightly cooked in oil. And sesame oil is particularly Warming. Pizzas are suitable for Air – cooked cheese is extremely Heavy (and Oily) and of course the base is floury. Porridge oats are Heavy, but can be Cool in quantity so regulation is required here. Red meat, especially lamb, is Heavy. Pulses and beans are both Heavy and Warm when used in stews and casseroles (highly recommended for Air Natures – having the additional quality of Moistness) and lentil soup is perfect, containing onions, garlic, ginger and coriander. Ripened fruits: kumquats, figs, peaches, mangoes. Aubergine is Heavy and Smooth – and Oily when fried.

Oily

Fish especially mackerel, salmon, kippers, sardines and pilchards. Tuna in oil. All oils stimulate digestive heat. Air Natures are especially recommended to use sesame oil for cooking, Heavy, Warm and Thick. Butter is excellent for Air Natures – Heavy, Salty and Oily. Lamb is both Warming and Oily, as is Duck. Bacon is an excellent food for Air Natures, almost always a favourite. Potato chips can quickly ground and soothe the busy and light Air energy. Sausages, either grilled or lightly fried. Salami, chorizo – a chorizo stew is excellent. Oily nuts such as walnuts and brazils – but all nuts are suitable for Air people, even – and especially - peanut butter. Chicken, although light, makes a good Air food if used in soup, combining two satisfying Air foods – chicken soup with barley (Oily and Warm) did not get its reputation for nothing! Rice, both white and brown, is Oily and Smooth. Olives in their own oils.

Smooth

Dairy produce and eggs. Eggs make an excellent food for Air - Heavy, Smooth and extremely nutritious. Cheese: creamy and full-fat cheeses are suitable: cheddar, Roquefort, stilton, gorgonzola, creme fraiche, camembert and brie. Buttermilk. All kinds of yoghourt and ice-cream. Custards, especially egg custard. Milkshakes and smoothies. Tofu is beneficial and soothing. Liquorice and dates – Smooth, Sweet and Warm. Bananas are good – Smooth, Heavy and nourishing. Mango, papaya, peaches, custard apples. Coconut cream but not coconut milk or the flesh of coconuts – too Cold and Rough. (It should be remembered that coconut cream is extremely dense and rich – for occasional use)! Avocado is Smooth but also Cool, so moderation only. Peanut butter is especially good for Air Natures: Smooth, Heavy, Oily and Warming. Broccoli, mushrooms, spinach, leeks, courgettes (zucchini) have qualities of Smoothness and Heaviness. Grains: barley and rice are both Smooth and Warm, but oats should be used sparingly, owing to their Cool nature. Their Smooth Heaviness will be attractive to Air and nourishing, but the Cool aspect must be taken into consideration. Basil is both Smooth and Sweet and cleansing when used added to other dishes.

Pungent/Spicy

Spicy or hot-flavoured foods such as Indian or Thai curries, Mexican chilli etc. can be seen as a kind of 'medicine' for Air individuals. That is, occasionally, and when need is felt for strength and energy.

In the same way, when Air is feeling tired and weak, a good steak will immediately strengthen and fortify the Air Nature's lightness. However, care should be taken not to overdo the Hot quality, a Warming effect is generally what is required. Warm-natured foods such as meat, especially lamb which is particularly warming (and also Oily) form a good basis for the Air Nature diet. Keep in mind that Air, whilst most usually Cool to Cold also has the ability to quickly flare to Hot and thus create damage. Cooked garlic and onion are Warm and Heavy, Oily and Smooth, an excellent base for dishes for Air Natures. All the heating spices: cinnamon, cloves, nutmeg, cardamom, ginger. Mild chillies, black pepper, mixed peppers (with the Heating red variety), mustard, Worcestershire sauce, chutneys. Horseradish sauce. Wasabi sauce. Caution with this one!

Moist

Air people are better suited to foods cooked with liquids, i.e. casseroles or stews – or lightly fried. Dried foods aggravate the Dry nature of Air and are consequently less than nutritious. Spinach is particularly Moistening. Any water-based plants, such as watercress. Beetroot is both Moist and Sweet. Asparagus is Moistening, but very Cooling, moderation only. Dairy products such as cheeses, butter and cream are also moisturizing. Apples are considered by Chinese medicine to increase the body fluids – good for Air Natures – but also have the qualities of cool plus rough.



Secondary Qualities of Foods to Pacify The Air Nature

Warmth and Pliability/ Flexibility

Warmth

Tibetan physicians would advocate a healthy dish of meat/vegetable soup to a patient suffering an Air imbalance.

All oils are inherently warming, especially sesame oil, which is Heavy as well as strongly Warming. Air Natures could use sesame oil where appropriate (it has a strong taste of its own) instead of the more usually advocated olive oil or the much thinner (and cooler) sunflower oil. A dish of onions and garlic, fried in sesame oil, will ground the Air humour when it is particularly disturbed and flighty. Fish, especially the Oily types like mackerel, are both warming and lubricate the dry air system. Lamb and game meat. Traditional Sunday roast dinner is ideal for Air Natures, Warming, Heavy and Oily with roast potatoes, roast turnips and gravy. Eggs are Warm in nature. Cornmeal (or polenta) has a characteristic of Warmth and can be prepared in a number of ways, from a breakfast porridge, with honey and milk, to an accompaniment to savoury dishes, or meat and vegetables. Sweetcorn itself as a vegetable. Fennel is Warming as is lettuce. Garlic, onions, ginger. Fried tomatoes and bacon on toast. Roasted root vegetables such as turnips, parsnips and Swedes, and butternut squash. Barley is particularly Warming – used in Tibet as tsampa, a starchy meat accompaniment, or fermented as chang, a beer. Similarly, cooked radish stimulates the digestive heat in that high, cold land. Walnuts are said by the Chinese to be Warming when eaten on a regular basis. Most foods grown in hot sunny environments have an inherent property of Warmth. Pomegranates have a post-digestive nature of Warmth but can also be astringent, so whilst strongly indicated for the smooth Earth constitution, Air Natures should consume only sparely.

Pliability/Flexibility

Foods grown in water are traditionally said to address the Stiff Air Nature qualities. Spinach and Watercress are two examples, rice too. Asian vegetables such as bean sprouts, bamboo shoots and the roots of water-dwelling plants such as the lotus or water lily. Shitake mushrooms are soft and flexible. In Africa the roots of the water-hyacinth are commonly used in stews.

Root vegetables such as potatoes, cabbage, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, swedes, turnips, carrots have a strong element of Earth are beneficial since the Air Humoural constitution is deficient in this area.





Foods which Aggravate The Air Nature

Bitter, Astringent, Light, Rough, Cold, Raw, Thin and Sharp

Bitter

Radishes are particularly Bitter and Cool. Radicchio lettuce and rye bread are both Bitter, as is rhubarb. Broccoli, grapefruit and melon. All gourds, fenugreek, barley, basil.

Light and Rough

Coffee can be too stimulating for Air Natures, its Light and Rough qualities and too much caffeine will increase the tendency for an overactive mind, resulting in jumpiness and unease. Rough fruits such as pineapple, lemons, melons, apples, pears, strawberries and raspberries. Pork is Cool and Rough, as is beef, although these qualities change when the meat is roasted, which then becomes an excellent food for Air. Vegetables such as cucumber, celery, cabbage, cauliflower, uncooked tomato, capsicums, aubergine, endive, chicory, peas are all Light and Rough - as are dried fruits. Too much muesli can be aggravating - the uncooked oats are Cool, Light and Rough. The toasted variety with added honey may be a better choice, but balance with cooked porridge – Smoother and more easily digestible for Air Natures.

Astringent

Vinegar and foods pickled in vinegar such as gherkins or pickled onions. Okra (or 'ladies fingers' usually found in Indian curries). Cranberries, green apples. All unripe fruit and vegetables and excess of uncooked vegetables, especially salad. In fact it is not advisable for Air people to eat too much salad at all, except in the summer months, and even then Tibetans would recommend their way with greens, which is to have them lightly steamed – gentle and warming for the Cool to Cold Humoural types (which includes the Phelgm Humour).

Cold

Lettuce, cabbage and cauliflower, radishes and asparagus are cold. Ice-cream (except in hot weather) and iced drinks should be avoided. Cold milk, cold drinks from fridge, cold fruit juices, salad, raw fruits or vegetables. Sugar in large quantities is Cold.

Raw

It is not advisable for Air people to eat raw food. Raw vegetables contain all the qualities which aggravate the Air Humoural Nature. As already pointed out, a better way for Air is to lightly steam the vegetables, thus preserving all their nutrients without those which adversely affect Air.

A special mention must be made of raw tomatoes. A tomato is one of the Coldest foods, also having the qualities of Thinness and Sharpness, in addition to being acidic. Lightly cooked in oil – never to be consumed raw by Air Natures – or those of a Fire Nature. Only Earth people with their Phelgm constitution are able to comfortably absorb the qualities of a raw tomato.

Thin - Sharp

Vegetables such as capsicum (green and red peppers), celery, cucumber and endive. Lemons, although Sour which is Heating, are predominantly Thin and Sharp, too harsh for Air Nature constitution. Fruits such as persimmon and nectarine. Celery. The Thai fruits such as star anise, dragon fruit are both Sharp and Thin. Cider and cider vinegar.

Cool and Light foods can be made Hot and Heavy by frying. Frying is good for Air Natures as part of

a balanced diet because oil counteracts the inherent dryness of the Air Humour, and Warm and Oily together make Heavy and comfortable the Light and Cool Air characteristics. A Warm oil such as sesame is especially recommended.

Counteract acidity

Air Natures, together with Fire Natures, but to a lesser degree, are subject to acidity. Highest on the list is alcohol, known to increase acidity, white wine particularly. In addition, cider is particularly Thin and Sharp. Raw tomatoes have possibly the worst effects for Air people , being Cold, Light, Rough and Acidic, in fact studies have shown raw tomatoes to have links with arthritis. Air should avoid too much fresh fruit, especially of the tropical variety. Fruit juices such as pineapple, grapefruit and lemon should be avoided. It should be remembered that red meat, beef especially is high in acidity, and since it is also Cool in nature, lamb is a better bet. Most importantly, fresh vegetables are alkaline which counteracts acidity, and Air individuals should be sure to include plenty of fresh green vegetables in their diet.



Beverages for The Air Nature

Non-Alcoholic drinks

A cup of tea is always soothing, especially for the Light Rough Air constitution. Warm milk, Ovaltine, Horlicks (malt drinks), hot chocolate at bedtime. Cows milk loses its Cold nature when boiled and becomes Light and Hot. Milkshakes (banana is a good choice for Air Natures) and Smoothies. Indian lassi - made with yoghurt is suitable for Air. Chamomile tea is calming, Herbal tea ingredients such as cinnamon, clove, nutmeg etc. such as the Indian Chai, or the Chinese 'Emperors' mix, are heating. Black tea is heavier than the 'orange pekoe' type and Darjeeling is too green and thin. Warm boiled water with a piece of ginger especially in Winter is comforting. Cardamom is seen by Tibetans as a warming spice for the Stomach and Spleen. Nettle tea stimulates Heat.

Air is the only Humoural Nature able to tolerate full-fat cow's milk (Air's Dryness) without an increase in physical phlegm (or catarrh).

Air people should drink plenty of water throughout the day (Dryness again) and if not possible to boil, make sure it is not iced. Traditionally, Tibetans warn that both Air and Earth Natures should not drink cold water, but only boiled water. If this doesn't appeal, then at least make sure to avoid ice-cold drinks – it is felt that

Alcoholic Drinks

Gin could be said to be suitable for Air because it is distilled using Juniper, a potent and Pungent herb, corresponding to the corrective 'pungent' quality for the Air Humoural Nature. It also contains Angelica, the 'women's Ginseng'. Angelica Moistens and invigorates the Blood, important for Air people , who may experience problems with anaemia. Also, Tibetans advise that the 'aged' liquors such as whisky and brandy (cognac) suppress Air's flightiness and are calming and settling. Rum is Warming. Mulled wine is excellent for Air, being both Heavy and Warm and contains the heating spices. Sweet liquors such as port, Madeira, muscatel and Sweet sherry and the Sweet and Creamy brandy or chocolate mixes and Sweet fruity cocktails settle the Air Humour.

Red wine is better than white as white wine tends to be more acidic, and red wine is Heavier. Cider is too thin and sharp for Air.

Conclusions For Air Natures

To make Heavy the Light quality of Air

The Air Humoural system must be grounded or 'earthed' and this can be accomplished with the help of diet and lifestyle, although also, as Tibetans believe, with the application of the Buddhist teachings. Breakfast should never be missed by Air Natures, and fried breakfasts from time to time are extremely nutritious for them. Air is the only Humoural type for whom potato crisps would be recommended! In moderation, their Saltiness, Oiliness and Heavy potato nature can be beneficial. And contrary to current thought, fast food such as McDonalds burgers, once in a while, can be helpful for Air Natures – containing as they do most of the elements recommended for an Air diet - Saltiness, Heaviness, Oiliness and the nutritional qualities of beef.

To Warm: an ideal diet for Air Natures would contain foods which are lightly cooked in Heating oil, such as sesame or olive oil or which are cooked with liquids. Nothing raw, salads only in moderation and a regular intake of carbohydrates such as a good solid bread, potatoes and rice. In fact, an ideal meal for Air is a bowl of traditional Italian bean soup (thick, warming soups are perfect) with pitta

bread and hummus. Or that old favourite chicken soup!

To Moisten: regular intake of fluids (not ice-cold), water, tea, juices, smoothies, milk shakes (if weight is not a problem) and soothing bedtime malted drinks. Soups are a particularly good food for Air Natures, easily digested and very nourishing. Lentil and vegetable, chicken and barley, any kind of soup in fact with the addition of made with a base of onions and garlic and a little ginger.

Most importantly for Air Natures, meals must be REGULAR, or the Light Air Humour will intensify and overwhelm. Air Natures should NEVER miss a meal, and if it seems that this may happen, then a snack must be found. Small meals eaten regularly throughout the day are best for Air, with a proper breakfast to start the day. Air people are strongly advised not to undertake a fast.

Since the Large Intestine plays such a important role in the Air Humoural make-up, and is prone to bloating, care should be taken to eat meals slowly and in a relaxed atmosphere. Anything eaten ‘on the run’ will cause bloating and discomfort for Air Natures.

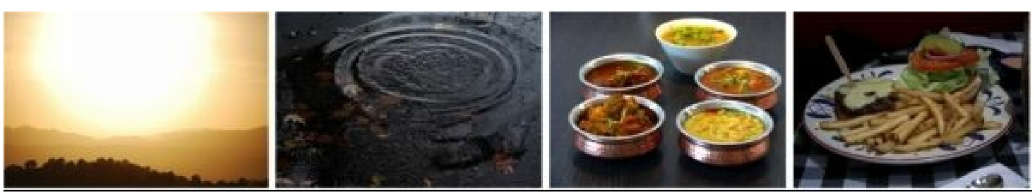
Therefore, Warming, Heavy, Moistening and regular, above all nourishing, sum up the Air Nature ideal diet.

Cuisine Suggestions for Air Natures

The cuisine of India is highly recommended for Air Natures, being generally moderately Mild, Warm, Spicy, Oily, Moist and relatively Heavy. Served with rice (Smooth and Sweet) and lentils (dhal) Heavy and nourishing.

A typical British diet is also suitable for Air Natures. Heavy, Warming, often Oily, Moist and strong on comforting-carbohydrates - both are nourishing and grounding to the Air Humour. The heavy cuisines of the Nordic countries and Germany also comfort the light Air Nature.

Air people, in contrast to the other two Natures, can tolerate richer type foods such as that of the French cuisine – Heavy, Fatty and carbohydrate-full. And the occasional hamburger and chips (fries) will help to settle the light Air energy.



Behaviour for The Air Nature

Comforting and welcoming environments. Convivial conversation, favourite music, familiar ambiance, warmth and low-lighting. The comfort of friends. (trad.)

Air individuals should aim to include lots of relaxing and pleasant activities with friends in their lifestyle. It is however, of the utmost importance that these are felt to be genuine, and that true communication exists - empty gatherings without compatibility will not satisfy Air's clarity.

Extremes of any activity, including, and especially, thought, heightens the Air Humour and brings mood-swings. Stopping the flow of thoughts – worrying, planning ahead. Going over things that have happened and can't be changed. 'Do not be the storehouse of schemes': Lao Tse, ancient Chinese philosopher. Time for meditation and developing the ability to rest in the present is good advice for anyone, but in the case of Air Natures it is especially important. Avoid too much talking and excitability. Try to remain balanced emotionally. Know how much stress is acceptable, and do not take on too much. Avoid people and activities that create stress. A nap after lunch settles the Air Humour, and is particularly recommended in the medicine teachings. Missing sleep, missing meals, too much alcohol – all such irregularities increase, or 'raise' the Air Humour and produce digestive upsets. The bloated stomach is a Air Nature issue and is caused by missed sleep, hunger and emotional upsets. Air types MUST eat at regular intervals – lack of food raises and aggravates the Air Humour and causes faintness, dizziness, irritability etc.

Although Air people have a high degree of independence and self-determination, they need the steady support and affection of family and good friends. These individuals may think they can get along very well alone and in fact it is very easy for Air Natures is to put up barriers and withdraw into themselves. Air's personality is such that, when in the mood for social interaction they can be lively and talkative, have a natural interest in other people and curiosity with regard to life in general. However, it is true to say that, owing to the Light quality of their energy, they are equally able to feel overwhelmed, and when this happens, Air Natures will want to be alone, to re-energise and reground him/herself. Whilst this is necessary and the right action in the circumstances, care should be taken to check that they are not unnecessarily isolating themselves and if this is the case , to take the necessary steps to make time for favourite activities and community with family and friends.

Since Air people must be careful not to isolate themselves, it is important that any work situation, or social environment in which they find themselves is entered into fully, with as much interaction with others as is comfortable. Group activities such as some kind of communal activity, with a common goal, are ideal as there is connection and a common aim without too much intensity or pressure on the individual and Light nature of Air Nature. Their tendency is to turn inwards and thinking of other people's needs breaks this down.

To have, or to know of, a place which offers real rest and respite is absolutely crucial for Air Natures. There must be somewhere, whether visited in the mind, or a 'real', physical environment, which exists for Air as a place to go, where calm and spiritual nourishment can be found.

Air people should be sure to have regular meals and good sleep, including naps in the afternoon, when needed – the Air Humour is the only one deriving benefit from this (afternoon naps are discouraged for the other two Humoural Natures). Avoid over-thinking! Make time for restful, soothing times spent with family and good friends.

Though they need regular stimulation and variety, Air Natures also need space to be alone and allow

the busy-ness of thoughts to flow away and to recoup their often scattered energies. Spacious landscapes - hilltops, lake views, wide skies – sometimes Air needs Air!

Lifestyle Activities for The Air Nature

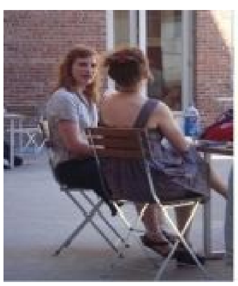
Daily exercise in moderation. It is important for Air to make sure regular exercise is a part of life. Too many thoughts and pressure will build up, which moderate physical exercise will help to disperse. A regular gym programme – but not too much aerobic which places too much strain on the Heart leading to weight loss. Air people are usually naturally slim and over-exertion (or dieting) places strain on the Light Humoural Nature. Nothing should be too strenuous – any activity carried to excess 'raises' the Air Humour and disturbs the body's equilibrium. Avoid becoming exhausted.

Fairly gentle kinds of exercise are best for Air. Particularly suitable are the traditional Chinese Tai Chi and Chi Gung practices. Both contain specific movements which have the effect of grounding the practitioner, especially valuable for flighty Air. The practice of Chi Gung, in which various postures are held, is conducive to developing a meditative state, combining aspects of both the physical and mental bodies. In the same way, yoga is very well suited to Air Natures. Pilates is an excellent exercise involving stretching, and swimming is both invigorating and calming. Horse-riding is satisfying and healthy and working with the energy of horses is generally therapeutic. Cycling and regular brisk walks are an easy way to enjoy gentle exercise.

Gardening is a particularly good activity for Air Natures -'hands-in' the Earth; grounding, calming, constructive with just the right amount of pleasant exercise in the fresh air and the soothing energy of green nature.

Competitive sports are not advisable for Air Natures - too much mental activity as well as physical.

Burning medicinal Tibetan or other soothing incense around the house, especially in the evening at the end of an active day helps to calm and ground the Air energy.

Careers for The Air Nature

There is a dichotomy within the Air Humoural Nature – a desire for stimulation and the company of others on the one hand, and the tendency to stress and mental unrest and a need for solitude on the other. It is important that Air Natures be aware of this and seek to balance at all times when deciding on careers to follow.

Architect, designer, advertising 'creative' (but watch that stress is not too high), writer (however, need sociability too), journalist, art critic, actor/actress, musician, media, public relations, psychiatrist, teacher, journalist, photo-journalist, linguist, astrologer, clairvoyant

Best Environment for The Air Nature

Low-lying. Warm and humid

Avoid extremes of climate, and very windy areas. Not too Hot, too Dry, too Wet-Damp, too high (mountainous), too unstable (earthquakes). Not barren or bleak (exposed mountainsides). Comforting, enveloping, warm, humid.

Air Natures should look for an environment which is low-lying, stable, warm - a temperate climate with plenty of vegetation. Barren hillsides, even in a warm climate, makes Air Natures feel exposed and uncomfortable. A humid climate is good for Air Natures, who feel comfortable and relaxed in the

Good places for Air Natures

The South-East Asian countries: Thailand, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Laos, Vietnam, Singapore. India, Sri Lanka, Mauritius, French Polynesia. South Africa, Mozambique, Kenya, Zanzibar. Florida in the USA. The East Coast of Australia. Rainforest.

Problem places for Air Natures

Bleak, cold and windy expanses such as Northern Scandinavia, high, exposed mountainsides. Damp and cool climates such as Scotland and Ireland. Dry, barren (Rough) with extremes of heat, desert environments such as the Middle East are not conducive to the Air Humoural Nature. Busy cities are not a suitable environment for light Air Natures. Initially attracted by the excitement and diversity, their light quality in the long-term becomes quickly exhausted.

Tibetans also traditionally advise against living in countries which are overcrowded and dirty, and where people are quarrelsome. This is especially important for Air Natures to bear in mind – their Light, enhanced senses are likely to be overwhelmed by such negative energies. Fire Natures will also find themselves unsettled and restless with a danger of heightened blood pressure in such surroundings.






Treatments/Therapies for The Air Nature



Steam baths, aromatherapy – relaxing treatments and moist air. Japanese 'hot tub' baths, with herbal packs. Spa treatments such as Asian-style gentle massage involving flowers and scented oils. in spa baths. Scents are especially important to Air Natures with their enhanced sense of smell. Saunas are not generally a good environment for Air, although warming, sauna heat is too drying for this type 'Hot stone' treatments are ideal for cold-natured Air. Moxabustion – the Chinese medicinal treatment of a slowly burning fragrant herbal stick applied to the skin on specific points is beneficial. Warming oil rubs - the Ayurveda treatment which uses hot cloth pads filled with heated (and warming) herbs and spices pressed on points all over the body. Additionally, another Ayurveda treatment which involves a spout of warmed oil being poured onto the point between the eyes is deeply relaxing, specifically targeting that area which is affected by the overactive mind.

Interiors for The Air Nature

Solidity, warmth, comfort, security, safety



Air Natures need warm, comfortable and relaxing environments. Solidity and safety can be expressed in an interior which contains rich deep and warm colours and textures in fabrics, rugs and carpets, solid wooden furniture and window coverings such as thick fabric blinds or curtains. No sharp contours. Curtains should close, fabric blinds should cover the window (light blinds and especially those made of metal which flap in draughts are unsuitable for Air Natures). Stable and cocoon-like - dark wood furniture, woollen throws, soft woven tapestry cushions, big sofas and easy chairs. Warm reds (not blue-toned), maroon, soft and warm browns, terra-cotta and ochre are soothing shades.

Air people tend to shrink from strong light – whether from natural sources such as sunlight, or from artificially over-lit rooms. Lighting should kept to low level and softly diffused – it is always better to have several sources of low light, rather than one or two over-bright, especially overhead. Oriental carpets, in their rich but soft colour patterns, are ideal for an Air interior. Paintings or prints in heavy frames, and photographs of family and friends. Candles on small brass trays or grouped in a big wooden dish for soothing warm lighting.

A sense of cocooning is important for Air Natures, a sense of being enclosed. The concept of home as a castle – or fortress – has special meaning for the Air individual. Once inside they need to feel secure and protected. Air people are immediately uncomfortable if they feel too exposed physically – large expanses of window should be avoided at all costs. The bare, loft type interior with floor to ceiling windows is not suitable for Air – too exposed and not sheltering. And not too many mirrors – again too exposing and too energizing in the interior. Air individuals need relaxation, not energy in the home. All signs of mental activity –computers or working materials – should be put away, or if possible kept in a study, away from the other areas of the house. Air needs to shut off visually from

mental activity.

Bedrooms should have a strong sense of stability and impregnability for Air people, the light sleepers – a solid heavy bed in a room without too many windows which can be completely covered with thick fabrics and the room made dark for a sense of security whilst sleeping. Absolutely no television or computers – the Air bedroom should be a serene shrine to sleep. This applies to the Fire Nature too.

Room Scenting for The Air Nature

Calming, comforting and warming



Scented candles, soft light and the thick and warm fragrances of ginger, fig, rose geranium, amber, sweet orange, tuberose and the comfortable ‘cooking smells’ of chocolate and vanilla. Aromatherapy oils in the warm spice scents are soothing, especially in Winter: Cinnamon, Cloves, Nutmeg (Christmas spices). Basil, cedar wood, benzoin (resin from Thailand), frankincense, myrrh, cypress, clary-sage, neroli, ylang-ylang. Burning incense creates a heavy warmth: the medicinal Tibetan Red Sandalwood mix is especially designed to calm Air’s busy mental activity. Herbal mixes such as ‘Sage Sticks’ and Mugwort/Artemesia, a moxabustion mix, also fall into this category. The resins which can be purchased with a small metal dish and a cone as an interior burner make an ideal environment for Air Natures – thick, heavy and warmly scented.

Medicinal Herbs for The Air Nature



These European herbs (and some Asian ones) have been chosen for their close approximation to their Tibetan counterpart:

Angelica (Dang Gui) the 'women's Ginseng' moistens and nourishes the blood in a gentler way than Ginseng.

Aswagandha (Withania somnifera), the roots of an Indian plant available in capsules is useful for relieving stress

Balloon vine (Cardiospermum) in gel form is effective for treating skin disorders such as eczema and dermatitis

Melissa or Lemon Balm has a calming effect on the Heart

Gotu Kola has long been used in Ayurvedic medicine to treat emotional disorders such as depression and to promote relaxation and enhance memory

Milk Vetch (Astragalus) is a tonic and immune stimulant

White Mustard Seed is warming

Marshmallow helps to eliminate acidity from the body and calm indigestion and is often used in conjunction with Slippery Elm which has a similar function

Parsley also reduces acidity, as does **Nettle**

Coriander helps to relieve flatulence from the Large Intestine

Passion Flower and **Valerian** are calming and used in cases of insomnia

Licquorice Root has a calming effect on the Heart, soothes indigestion, and strengthens the Spleen

Hemp seed calms the mind

Since Arthritis is thought to be influenced by both the Air and Phelgm Humours, Frankincense, Myrrh, and Devil's Claw have been found to help alleviate the symptoms of pain and swelling.

In general, Air Natures should look for the supplements that calm the mind and the spirit.

The 'Food Spices'



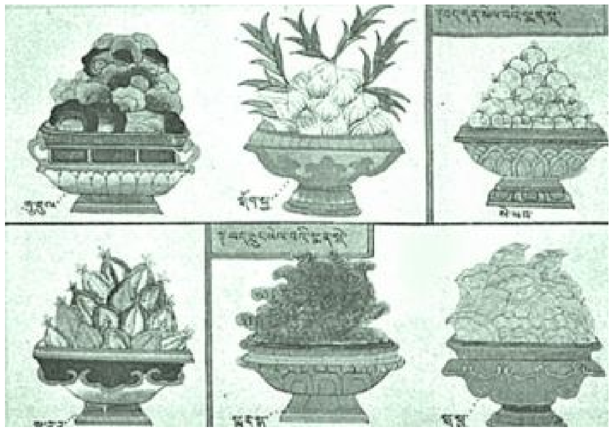
Black Pepper, Ginger, Nutmeg, Cardamom, Clove, Cinnamon. Fengreek and Saffron are warming. Garlic, like honey, is another 'all purpose' natural food – being highly nutritious and having protective, healing and cleansing properties

It is a good idea for Air individuals to assist their digestive heat by regularly adding the warming spices to cooked dishes.

Appendix 1

Traditional Tibetan Medicines And Practices

The 'Six Good Things'



Bamboo Manna for the Lungs
Saffron for the Liver
Clove for the 'Life-Channel'
Nutmeg for the Heart (Lung)
Cardamom (smaller) for the Kidney
Cardamom (greater) for the Spleen

In addition **Myrobalan:** (Terminala Chebula retz.) - the 'magical Myrobalan', symbol of 'King' medicine is said to contain all the Six Tastes (excluding saltiness) and the Eight Powers - to give life and increase digestive heat. Able to cure all Three Humoural disorders, Tibetans hold this to be the very symbol of their medicine. The Medicine Buddha holds a sprig of Myrobalan in his right hand. Found only rarely now as the large trees are disappearing due to de-forestation in those areas where they grow.



Compounding of medicines

Whether in pill or powder form, Tibetan medicines do not use only one ingredient to treat a disorder.

Rather they are a combination, or 'compound' which consists of several different medicinal materials usually up to twelve, traditionally not only of a vegetable nature, but also gem, wood, metal and animal materials. Nowadays, mainly due to public pressure, the animal matter has been generally replaced, except in the more remote and traditional areas. In any case, herbs are thought to have a faster action than the animal products, or gem stones.

Organization of Compound

When making up a compound, medicinal materials are arranged in this way: King, Queen, Prince, Minister, and Public. The 'King' will be the material most potent for the disorder in question, backed up by the 'Queen' and the 'Prince', and assisted by the 'Minister' and 'Public' - herbs/materials.

Efficacy of medicine

Medicines are seen to have the following effect in terms of speed of action on the body system:

Fastest: (1) decoction (to drink) (2) Powder (dissolved in water) (3) Pills (4) Extracts (5) medicated butter pills – currently not much in use. Except for areas such as Ladakh and Bhutan, pills are the most common form of medication, prepared with the help of machinery and being easier to store and dispense.

PRECIOUS PILLS



A special feature of Tibetan medicine are the beautiful precious pills. These are compounds for use as an extra treatment, as much to impart the blessings inherent in them as for their medicinal effect. Created as they are with devotion and prayers, and in the case of the special Moon pill, the healing (and cooling) rays of the moonlight, they are regarded by Tibetans to have the most beneficial effects of all and are much sought-after.

Rinchen Mangjor Chenmo – Great Precious Accumulation Pill/Great Multi-Compound Pill. For Blood, Bile and mucus. 'There is no ailment this pill cannot cure' but predominantly Blood for Tipa disorders. Restores life and energy. Mainly Cool.

Rinchen Drangor Rilnag Chenmo – Great Precious Cold Compound Black Pill. 100 ingredients, including gold and silver, precious sapphires, emeralds, turquoise and ruby in addition to medicinal herbs. Said to clarify all sense organs, treat contagious fever and strengthen bones.

Rinchen Tsotru Dashel – Precious Purified Moon Crystal. Includes gold, silver, copper, brass, lead and bronze. 'Sacred' substances and a precious 'secret' ingredient are added. Assists in cases of

chronic weakness and combats infections and inflammation. Said to prolong life. Basically Cool properties.

Rinchen Jumar – Contains coral, mother of pearl, lapis lazuli as well as saffron, nutmeg, and medicinal calming herbs. Helpful for Lung – headaches from tension, body stiffness and loss of memory. Useful for a healthy person once in a while to combat any ailment developed from a 'nerve' disorder.

Rinchen Yu Nying 25 – Great Old Turquoise. (The number after the name of the compound refers to the number of ingredients). Contains turquoise, coral and pearl – the three semi-precious substances most venerated by Tibetans for their healing properties, and worn, as jewellery, by most men as well as women. Purified iron in addition to the medicinal herbs. A special pill for all liver ailments (including abuse by over-consumption of alcohol and food) and useful for high blood pressure). Detoxicating and of a Cool nature.

Rinchen Ratna Samphel – Precious Wish-Fulfilling Jewel – perhaps the most desirable of all! Containing gold, silver copper, coral, turquoise pearl and lapis as well as iron, lead and loadstone plus the rare and much venerated special Zi stone – a sort of fossil of a basic brown colour with particular markings. Such stones, when exchanging hands, can command very large sums of money. Ratna Samphel is known as an 'antidote' (to almost anything) but said to be beneficial in the event of strokes and paralysis, trembling and numbness. All kinds of nerve disorders. Also deafness, loss of smell and loss of bodily control. For high blood pressure, and heart ailments, hypertension and Parkinsons.

Rinchen Nag Chenmo – Precious Black Pill/Great Cold Compound. Coldest effect for disorders of heat – hepatic/gastro-intestinal disease, gastro-enteritis, arthritis.

Rinchen Tsa Byjor – Great Hot Compound. For internal abcess

Rinchen Chagril – Great Iron Pill. Improves eyesight and also for hepatitis and gastric problems.

It can be seen that these pills are all compounded for a cold to cooling effect – which may seem at variance with the cold climate of Tibet. However, since most people would probably not see a doctor until the disorder was fairly advanced, it is the nature of most disorders, once present in the body, to gradually become warmer and if left too long, a hot disorder results, which is why most of the medicines are of a cooling nature, intended to cure hot disorders.

Also, Tibetan doctors say that their patients would tend to have problems of a physical nature with the body, and not the mind, as in the West. Although there are many medicinal compounds for mental disorders, the most popular precious pills are designed for physical complaints, although they too contain the blessings of the lama and the gods, since body and mind are 'not separate' but interdependent.

In addition there are pills prepared specially to strengthen the prayers of practitioners.

Note: As can be seen, substances other than that of plants are used in the compounding of Tibetan Medicine. Gem stones, minerals, and metals, including the precious metals of gold and silver can be used. However, it is more usual nowadays, with the increased popularity of Tibetan medicine and the growth in the number of people seeking it, to work with plant ingredients only.

*The terms Phelgm, Tipa and Lung used in the Appendices are the Tibetan terms for the Natures: Earth, Fire and Air.

Appendix 2

Traditional Tibetan Diagnosis



Pulse-taking

Chief of these is pulse taking, perhaps the most important of all the 'divining' tools, and which is certainly the first thing the Tibetan doctor will do as the patient seats him/herself before him (or her). In Tibetan medicine, the pulses are more subtle and complex than in traditional Chinese medicine, and a true practitioner of old would have studied them for up to 18 years. Such a person could tell things about the medical history of a patient which it would seem only a psychic could know. Although no-one studies for this length of time nowadays (the normal period of study for students at Men Tsee Khang in Dharamsala is seven years) all doctors practising Tibetan medicine are trained to 'read' a patients body from their pulse, which brings them to a strong and accurate analysis of the patients problem. All the organs of the body are read through no less than three fingertip positions of each hand, minus the 'little' finger and the thumb. Each person has his/her "constitutional pulse" which must be identified, then the general characteristics of: strong, overflowing, rolling, fast, taut, firm for the Hot disorders and: weak, sunken, declining, slow, loose, empty for the Cold disorders identified. Many influences are brought to bear, including solar and lunar influences and seasonal, and in the case of the experienced practitioner, schooled for many years, it is possible to read a diagnosis of a close relative, such as a child or husband.

Tibetan physicians identify a 'male' and 'female' pulse. The male energy is 'action' energy and the female is wisdom 'intellect-mind' energy. Male and Female combine to bring together wisdom and intellect – one requiring the energy of the other to achieve completion. Action energy – male needs the wisdom of voidness – female (a Buddhist concept) and voidness (wisdom) without bodhichitta (loving compassion energy or action) means there is no service to humanity.

Traditional medicine teaches that the male pulse resides in the left side of the body, so the male patient offers the doctor his left wrist for diagnosis. The female pulse is on the right, and the right wrist is offered by a woman to the doctor. The male pulse is thought to be thick and bulky, and the female thin and fast.

However, the first could indicate the presence of an excess of phlegm in the body and the second, that of Tipa, so even in these early stages, it is easy to gauge the extent of the physician ‘s immense knowledge and skill.

Urine Analysis

Also not so much practiced these days, urine analysis can be briefly summed up in this way:

If the urine is white, thicker than Lung urine, and with smaller ‘saliva-like’ bubbles which ‘stay’ and do not burst after stirring, then the disorder is Phelgm. There may also be some whitish sediments in a Phelgm urine.

If the urine is thick, smells unpleasant and has a reddish tinge and small bubbles which quickly disappear on stirring, is turbid and steaming, it is Tipa.

Tongue Analysis

Briefly, a healthy tongue should be light, pink and with little or no coating:

If it is reddish, and the texture slightly dry and rough, it is Lung

If it is covered with a thick, light yellow coating, it is Tipa

If it is whitish with a sticky coating, or with a lustreless, smooth and moist texture, it is Phelgm.

Appendix 3

Traditional Tibetan Accessory Therapies



There are some treatments traditionally attributed to the practice of Tibetan medicine, although, due to pressure of time, these days tend to be by-passed, at least in the busy practices of India and Nepal.

Treatments are divided into two categories: rough and smooth.

Medicinal mineral baths are given as an example of 'smooth' treatment, as is massage, oil compresses and moxabustion.

Rough treatments would be Golden Needle or Golden Hammer – where the head of hammer is heated and applied directly to points.

Smooth treatments would be prescribed for Lung and the rough treatments for Phelgm (and all chronic disorders) with perhaps a combination of both for Tipa.

Tibetan Acupressure

Similar to Chinese acupressure, but using fewer meridian points, Tibetan acupressure uses the thumbs and balls of the three middle fingers. On the points on the back, elbows can be used for greater pressure. Pressure is applied for 5 – 8 seconds. And for up to three times, completing one cycle and starting again at once. Useful in cases of tension headaches, anxiety and panic attacks and insomnia, tinnitus, fatigue, tired and painful eyes, low back pain, constipation, and menstrual irregularity.

Tibetan doctors advocate the use of 'self-acupressure' which can be helpful in areas such as the neck and shoulders, but for other parts of the body, this is not as effective as treatment from a practitioner.

The points are as follows:

From the point at the top of the spine/base of the neck

1. Lung point
2. Tipa pt. caused by cold disorder
3. Tipa pt. " " "
4. Phelgm pt. cough
5. Phelgm pt. cough
6. and 7 Lung problems (main points)
8. Lung and Phelgm – Liver gas and pain

9. Tipa pt. Liver – Gall Bladder/Bile
10. Tipa – main Bile point
11. Spleen
12. Stomach
13. Regenerative organs
14. Main Kidney Point
15. Kidney and Womb. EXERCISE CAUTION: No moxa DIRECTLY on 13/14/15 pts. Only apply moxa. to the sides of these points, not directly on top.
16. Large Intestine: cystitis, haemorrhoids
17. Small Intestine: Cold in small intestine
18. Urinary point: stones in urinary tract
19. Menstrual point: thigh and leg pain
20. Bowel point: constipation, gas, diarrhoea

Tibetan Massage

Traditional Tibetan massage is a combination of body massage and acupressure.

It is recommended that a combination of the two is used.

Tibetan massage is always combined with oil, and in winter, or a cold climate, warming oils such as sesame, olive and Aquilaria are most suitable. In summer, cooling oils such as coconut oil can be used.

- Four fingers, bent thumb, downward strokes, pulling hard
- Work areas like working 'old skins' (leather) - quite roughly. Pick up flesh in hands then press it back. Use body weight.
- Top of arm, leg etc. soft areas - stroke, under thigh arm etc.-squeeze.
- Heel of hand on forehead, pull up hair.
- Rub strongly on the abdomen, good for digestive heat.
- Legs, arms, - all downward strokes.
- Fingers and toes, soles of feet and palms of hands - pull gently and shake one's hands off afterwards.
- Back of shoulder-blades - very powerful.
- For the non-fleshy parts of the body, such as chest and abdomen, it is better to do the rubbing technique – long vigorous strokes up and down.
- For the head: oil would be lightly massaged into the head, paying particular attention to the crown points. Massaging would become a little more vigorous, and the hair would be lightly pulled towards the end of the session.

Traditionally, the finishing treatment was to apply chickpea or barley flour to the patient's body, and rub well. This had two effects: one was to further warm the body (barley is seen to be warming) and secondly - to take the place of towels! In such a cold climate where traditionally only one or two baths are taken every year, the patient could put his clothes back on and go home!

Another type of treatment falling into the category of 'massage' is the application, on the 'Lung points' of a heated pad, made from putting nutmeg and cumin seeds into a clean cloth, making it into a

pad, immersing it in hot sesame oil, then pressing hard on the body points.

Tibetan Moxabustion

Previously doctors applied moxabustion, which is traditionally made from Artemesia or Mugwort (with aniseed and nutmeg) wrapped into a paper cone, affixed to certain points on the body with the secretion of a garlic clove, then lit and allowed to burn to near the skin, imparting heat directly onto the point. Nowadays moxabustion material is factory manufactured and shaped into sticks, rather like incense. Operating in the same way, they are held over the point, rather than being placed on it. It is still possible, in more traditional practices, to find the 'cone' type moxabustion which is applied directly to the skin, and used where a more diffused heat over a larger area is needed.

Useful in cases of indigestion, lack of digestive heat, 'cold' Kidney - or lack of Kidney heat, oedema, sports sprains, Phelgm deposit on chest, damp Heat in body. All psychological disorders: anxiety, depression, insomnia, panic attacks, stomach distension, vertigo, weakness of memory. Hernia, benign tumours, joint pains, arthritis, joint inflammation, nerve inflammation (sciatic nerve, neurological disorders etc.)

In fact, moxabustion is a good treatment for most problems arising from Lung and Phelgm disorders.

Moxabustion treatments are generally not suitable for Tipa – ESPECIALLY ANYTHING HEATED ON THE TOP OF THE HEAD.

Main Moxabustion Points

These are the same as those detailed under the heading 'Acupressure' with the exception of the crown point, which can be found using the traditional method: take a thread and stretch from one ear to the other. Then take another over the face, centre of nose, to back of head – where one thread crosses another – this is the crown chakra.

For migraine, chronic headaches, good for Parkinson's, epilepsy, chronic sinus, memory, eyesight, sore eyes, tinnitus, low blood pressure. Moxabustion on the sternum, from and back, beside (not on) the vertebrae is good for arthritis.

In addition, there are moxabustion points on the front of the body, as follows:

1. Centrally between the collar bones, just under the throat hollow
2. Sternum point – centrally between the nipples – another main Lung point
3. One finger below – Phelgm digestive points (central and 1" to each side)
4. Half finger below - Tipa digestive points (central and 1" to each side)
5. Half finger below – Lung digestive points (central and 1" to each side)
6. Navel points (central and 1" to each side)

Golden Needle

An old remedy, not much used except in remoter areas, involves inserting a special 'golden' needle into the crown point of the head, and lighting a small bulb of moxabustion which is held in the little 'cup' shape on the top of the needle. Said to help with feelings of panic and distress, anxiety etc.

Golden Hammer

Can be made of silver or copper, in addition to gold. The head of the hammer is heated and applied to specific points. Used in cases of arthritis, rheumatism, poor digestive heat, dizziness and

paralysis. Again, a remedy from the more traditional areas.

Cupping

The placing of special cups on the skin, usually the back, which form a vacuum – usually to 'move' stagnant blood and improve circulation, which may contribute to the pressure or tension felt in the back of the neck, and or shoulders. Generally best prescribed for Tipa patients, occasionally Phelgm, may be too strong for Lung.

Cups are made of copper or glass. Each metal has its own quality. Copper is said to have the power to dry pus, fever of the lungs and inflammation of the Liver. Said to give only temporary relief. When used traditionally, the method may involve making a small cut over the area if it appears red or 'dark coloured' to let out the 'bad' blood, but this more invasive version is probably not used with people unused to the treatment.

Fomentation (hot compress)

Carum carvi Linn. (caraway) and Semen myristica (nutmeg) are powdered and placed in a square of clean white cloth (muslin ideally) and made into a pad, then immersed in hot sesame oil and compressed onto the various Lung points, bringing heat directly to the affected area.

Medicinal baths

Patients would be directed to various different natural hot springs in the Himalayan foothills to take a bath, usually during the Spring season when a family

outing with picnics would be made, where people congregated socially as well as for healing. Different properties in the water, i.e. sulphur, iron etc. would be prescribed for particular problems. Such springs and pools exist in areas such as Bhutan, Ladakh and north-western Nepal as well as Tibet.

Tibetan physicians recognize five different types of medicinal bath:

1. Coal and calcite
2. Coal and sulphur
3. Coal and mineral exudate
4. Coal and calcite and mineral exudate
5. Coal and mineral exudate and sulphur and 'realgar' (soil extract)

Note: In the case of the Traditional therapies, the Tibetan terms for the Three Humours is used. That is: Phelgm (Phelgm), Tipa (Fire) and Lung (Air)

Jewellery

Tibetans would, and still do, wear a piece of turquoise against the body. This can be worn threaded on a red string through a hole pierced in the ear – generally for men, or around the neck for women. Thought to strengthen and protect the Liver, it should be especially effective for Tipa.

Coral is also used as a kind of external medicine and is associated with the Brain. Thought to calm and nourish it is more expensive than turquoise and usually found as a small piece, strung along with a larger turquoise stone.

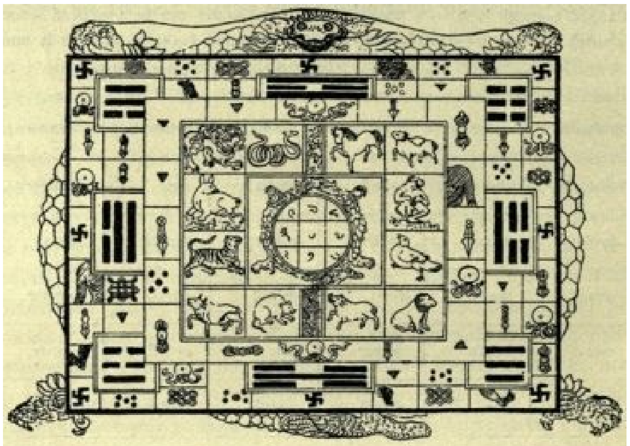
Freshwater pearls are also worn traditionally, and though their application is unclear, it seems the fact that they grow in water which is of very low temperatures in Tibet, points to their being prized for their intrinsic cooling properties.

It could also be that the freshwater pearl emerges from the murky depths pure and unblemished. Like the symbolism of the lotus flower then, this could carry the meaning that, as Buddhist thought teaches, purity and clarity can arise from our natural, clouded condition.

Finally there is the precious zhi stone, a lozenge-shaped naturally occurring brown stone with a particular paler coloured marking. Such stones are very rare and so highly prized that they fetch extremely high prices, even amongst Tibetans, when changing hands. They are thought to bestow protection on the wearer.

Appendix 4

Where To Find: More Information On Tibetan Medicine



THE MYSTIC TABLET.[13]

Where To Find: Tibetan Medical Practitioners

Anyone wishing to consult a Tibetan doctor should contact the following:

In India

Men Tsee Khang: Training school for students (almost always Tibetan) but the doctors also see private patients. In addition Men Tsee Khang have a postal consultation service for those who cannot travel to meet a medical practitioner personally. Under the auspices of H.H. the Dalai Lama, at Dharamsala, India but also has headquarters in New Delhi, with doctors in other areas of India and Nepal. Website details below.

Chagpori Insitute at Darjeeling, India, was begun by Dr. Trogawa Rinpoche to continue the tradition of the first medical establishment of that name in Tibet.

In Nepal

Men Tsee Khang has five branches operating in Nepal. In addition, there are private practices in Kathmandu and Bouddha - one is Kunphen Clinic, at Chetrapati, near Thamel, Kathmandu or ask at Tibetan-owned hotels such as Hotel Vajra or Hotel Utse in Thamel, Kathmandu who will be happy to give directions. The Kathmandu Guest House usually has information about local practices on their noticeboard.

In Bhutan:

The Dungtsos (doctors) at the National Institute for Traditional Medicine, Thimpu, Bhutan

There are doctors in Sikkim and traditional Amchis in Ladakh

In other parts of the world, the USA and Europe:

The website: www.dharma-haven.org/tibetan/medicine-clinics/htm. is an excellent source of medical practitioners and addresses, and the website for the Government of Tibet in Exile has a long list of addresses of Tibetan medical centres worldwide.

(www.tibet.com/Med_Astro/addresses.html)

Men Tsee Khang, Dharamsala: www.men-tsee-khang.org (official website) Has list of branches and addresses.

Men Tsee Khang, Exports site: www.tibetan-medicine.org

Government of Tibet in Exile: www.tibet.com

The Tibet Foundation: www.tibet-foundation.org

Dr. Pasang Yonten Arya: www.tibetanmedicine-edu.org/

Eliot Tokar site: www.tibetanmedicine.org

PADMA medicine: www.padma.ch/en/tibetanmedicine

Tara College of Medicine affiliated with Samye Ling Monastery, Dumfriesshire, Scotland: www.tararokpa.org

Medicine questions answered: www.tibetmed.org

Dr. Keyzom Bhutti (female medical practitioner in USA): www.tibetanherbalhealing.com

Medical branch of the Shang Sung Institute: www.shangsung.org

Institute for Traditional Medicine. Informative site includes information on medicine in Bhutan: www.itmonline.org

Dutch Foundation for Tibetan Medicine
(multi-lingual site) www.tibetaansegeneeksunde.nl/eng/

Another site for the Dutch Foundation for TM:
http://dmoz.org/Health/Alternative/Tibetan-Medicine/

Tibetan Medicine and Holistic Healing, Boulder, USA:
www.holistic-health.org

About medicinal plants: www.plantlife.org.uk www.transitionsabroad.com www.earthisland.org

Endnote

The medicinal herbs suggested – although selected in accordance with the theory of Tibetan medicine - are (with a few exceptions) not those used in traditional Tibetan medicine. This is because such medicinal herbs grow only in specific (and gradually diminishing) areas of the high Himalaya - of Tibet, Ladakh, Bhutan, Sikkim, Northern India and Nepal. Such material is very highly prized, and much sought after by the local people of the area, sometimes for personal use, but more often these days due to the increasing popularity of natural medicines, to sell, in some cases, for high prices. Anyone wishing to utilize the services of a Tibetan medical practitioner, and receive the medicines, would have to travel to see them where they practice (see Appendix 4).

Some varieties of the Tibetan plants used in traditional medicine have been discovered to be growing in an area of the European Alps, in both Italy and Switzerland. At present there is only a very limited identification process underway, and apart from PADMA 28 no medicines have been compounded, a difficult process as a typical Tibetan medication will use a number of different ingredients. It has been said, also, that although these plants are the same family of those in the Himalaya, because of different climatic conditions, their strength and efficacy is inferior.

The Men Zee Khang in Dharamsala offers, through its website, some basic mixes but these will not begin to approach the effect one can find through personal communication and prescription after diagnosis, as well as the fresh and specific compilations the doctor recommends.

PADMA 28

This is a medicine, based on an authentic Tibetan recipe which is manufactured in a Swiss laboratory and now marketed globally. PADMA 28 (so called since it is Entry 28 on an original collection of recipes) is a complex formula containing a number of medicinal herbs designed to assist and maintain a healthy circulatory system. The subject of much research, claims are made for its efficacy in treating high blood pressure, and it is also thought to build a strong immune system. (see Appendix 4 PADMA 28 website)

Medicine Buddha



The medicine Buddha, the Teacher of Medicine and the King of Lapis Lazuli Light (*Bhaishajyaguru*, Sangye Menla, Vaidurya)

His radiant body is azure blue. His left hand is in the meditation mudra and holds a begging bowl full of long life nectar in his lap. As a sign that he gives protection from illness, his right hand is outstretched in the gesture of giving and holds the "great medicine", the myrobalan plant (*a-ru-ra*).

Namo Maha Beshajeya

Medicine Buddha Mantra

"Om Namo Bhagavate Beshajeya Guru Bedurya Prabha Rajaya Tathagataya Arahate Samayak Sam Buddhaya Tadyataya Arahate Samayak Sam Buddhaya Tadyatha Om Beshajey Beshajeya Maha Beshajeya Beshajeya Rajaya Samungate Savaha"

Honour to the Great Medicinal Buddha! Whoever due to wrong ideas and attitudes is bound to fall into states of suffering if he even hears the sound of your sacred name, He will not be reborn in sorrow And will reach the state of immaculate Purity.

Medicine Buddha Offering

Before beginning his work for the day/seeing his first patient, the Tibetan physician practices, in front of his shrine, an offering to the Buddha of Medicine, as follows:

He takes one drop of amrita (blessed water or 'nectar') and places it on his tongue. With his ring finger, the third of his left hand he offers, in the direction of his representation of the Buddha of

Medicine, whether in statue form or as a ‘thangka’ - a traditional painting of the image on canvas and framed in silk brocade – and repeats:

MAY ALL SUFFERING PEOPLE BE FREE OF SICKNESS
MAY ALL FOOD AND MEDICINE BE BLESSED AS NECTAR

Acknowledgements

First thanks are for my root teacher, Sogyal Rinpoche (author of the 'Tibetan book of Living and Dying') whose student I became in 1987, without whom I would never have found and followed the footprints of the bull.

My first medicine teacher Kate Roddick, that sunny morning in Kathmandu. All the lamas and teachers (including H.H. the Dalai Lama) I have met and studied with in Nepal, India and Bhutan, as well as the UK, France and Italy. The inimitable Dungtso Pema Dorje of the National Institute for Traditional Medicine in Thimpu, Bhutan and Dr. Paolo Morisco who worked with him as co-Director (the 'Sun and the Moon') and allowed me to help him there. Dr. Ferdinand Meyer whose book 'gso-ba rigpa' was so inspiring (although published in French!) and whom I was thrilled to briefly meet in Thimpu.

Dr. Kunzang at the Kunphen Clinic, Kathmandu, Dr. Trogawa Rinpoche of Chagpori Insitute, Darjeeling, India, Namkai Norbu Rinpoche who re-established the tradition of the Medical conference in Milan, Italy (since then more international conferences have been held in the USA), all the doctors at Men Zee Khang in Dharamsala, especially Drs. Dawa and Qusar. Nyoshul Khen Rinpoche, Tulku Urgyen Rinpoche, and Lamas Tsultrim and Dawa of Thimpu, Bhutan.

Akong Tulku and Lama Yeshe of Samye Ling Monastery in Dumfriesshire, Scotland. Ringo Tulku of Sikkim, H.H. the Sakya Trizin and Karma Thinley Rinpoche. And for the inspiration and indirect transmission of his presence, the great master H.H. Dilgo Khyenste Rinpoche.

Nada Stone of Marance in the Dordogne, where I was able to finally finish this book.. My husband Paul for his unfailing support, help and encouragement.

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